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FOREWORD

The able author of this book has done me the honour of asking me to write a foreword to it. As I am deeply interested in the welfare of the toiling millions of my countrymen, I comply with the request with sincere thankfulness.

I have read the book through and through, and I can unhesitatingly say that it is a masterly production and makes an exceptionally valuable contribution to the large amount of literature which has grown around "Rural India" since Dadabhai Naoroji first drew attention, in the early fifties of the last century, to the poverty of the Indian peasant and the need of ameliorating his condition.

The author has started with the important advantage of being an agriculturist himself. Born and brought up as such, he has lived and moved among his brother cultivators, including in that term the small zamindar as well as the peasant. Their difficulties have been his difficulties, their anxieties and sorrows have been his anxieties and sorrows. It is natural therefore that he should be grieved to see their condition deteriorating from day to day, and it is not surprising that he has poured forth in this book the grief that he and many others like him have for a long time felt over the calamitous change that has overtaken the peasantry in this country.

But the author does not suffer from a defeatist attitude of mind. Though the situation is extremely depressing, he would not give way to a feeling of helplessness. He believes in effort and not in fate. He has spent years of his life in making a close study of the causes of the poverty of his fellow agriculturist. The first hand knowledge of the problems of rural India which he thus possesses has been enriched by a further study of a large volume of literature, both Indian and foreign, relating to agriculture and its allied activities, in its special bearing on Indian agriculture. He has carefully noted what great progress agriculture has made in other countries during the last few decades, and in one country during the last few years, with the help of Science and the support of the Governments of those countries. As the result of all his study and meditation, the writer has suggested practical remedies the adoption of which, he confidently hopes, will materially improve the condition of the peasantry. A perusal of the book will show that those remedies have been suggested with the single-minded desire of bringing about an effective amelioration in the economic condition of the Indian cultivator. Keeping that sole objective before his mind, the writer has dealt with only those questions of a general character which have a direct economic bearing on the prosperity or adversity of the peasant, such as currency, exchange, bank-rate and Government borrowings, in so far as they affect the agriculturist. He has carefully avoided going into questions of a political character, such as the excessive costliness of the general administration of the country, and particularly of the army, though they have an undoubted effect on the lot of the cultivator.

The author has given abundant reasons for the conclusions he has placed before the reader and he has been at pains to show that those

conclusions are supported by the opinions of European writers, who cannot be accused of any political bias against the system of administration that has existed in this country for the last a hundred and fifty years, and to which responsibility for the present condition of the ryot undoubtedly at least partly belongs.

The method adopted for dealing with the subject is so systematic and well-thought out that the interest of the reader grows as he goes along, and when the final chapter of remedies is reached he is enabled to see that, from the point of view of the cultivator, the recommendations which have been put forward are the most suitable in the conditions in which he has been placed and the necessities to which he is exposed.

In the introduction the author naturally starts with giving a description of the condition of the agricultural classes as he knows it, which he rightly describes as miserable. Their poverty is generally admitted. But as the Simon Commission observed, "the depth of poverty, the prevailing presence of which cannot escape notice, is not so easily realised." Writing of the indebtedness of the ryot, the Royal Agricultural Commission remarked: "No one, we trust, desires to witness a continuation of a system, under which people are born in debt, live in debt and die in debt, passing on their burdens to those that follow. That there are large numbers of hopelessly insolvent debtors in rural areas is generally admitted, and we cannot regard it as making for health in the body-politic that they should be allowed to remain without hope and without help." Under the conditions which exist the result is that when the harvest is ready the Zamindar duns the peasant for rent and the creditor attaches or threatens to attach his crops. And this leads to what must be admitted to be a real tragedy, viz., that "the peasant who produces the grain does not get enough even to appease his hunger with and has to be satisfied with the worst kind of food, giving the smallest nourishment." The author is supported in this view by Mr. S. K. Iyengar, author of "Indian Rural Economics" who says: "The rural population seemed to try to stifle appetite rather than to meet it properly, whether a commodity consumed was nutritious and health-giving was hardly considered," the dominant consideration always being to manage to live on as small an amount of food grain as possible. The author is also supported in this view by Dr. Harold Mann, Director of Agriculture of Bombay, who, when retiring at the end of a long and distinguished service, said that "the secret of the whole prosperity of the agricultural population was the filling of their stomachs;" and he added: "My last message to the people of this land, to all social workers, and to those in charge of the administration, is to devise means whereby the cultivator might be given sufficient food." "A very responsible officer of the Government", says the author, "while giving evidence before the Royal Agricultural Commission stated, and what he said is perfectly correct, that more people died of mal-nutrition in this country than by famine or epidemic." The result of all this is that infant mortality is highest in this country and the expected average of life is the lowest, being 22.59 years for males and 23.31 for females, while in England it is 46.04 males and 50.02 for females. The average income per head of the population in India is according

to one estimate 1/12th of that of Great Britain, and less than 1/20th according to another. According to the Central Committee of the Banking Enquiry Committee in 1928, the average annual income in India did not work up to a higher figure than about Rs. 42 or Rs. 3-8 a month. The author has said enough to justify him in saying that "the appalling poverty of the cultivator is thus a reality and cannot be denied by any one in the country, and that it is the duty of all well-wishers of the country to find out ways and means by which the condition of the peasantry can be improved in order to save the country from the horrors of a social upheaval which is bound to come sooner or later, if conditions remain as they are at present."

The book is divided into four parts. In Part I the writer has examined the six causes to which the poverty of the Indian peasant is generally attributed, and has shown that either the allegations are incorrect or they require to be qualified in important respects. In Part II, to which the author gives the heading "Investigation", he gives the history of the patient and the treatment to which he has been subjected. He recalls with melancholy satisfaction the good old days when the agriculturist occupied a high status in the village community, and comparing it with that which he occupies today, the author naturally deplures the change. "In order to find out the causes, which are responsible for the change", says he, "we must look into the condition of life prevailing in the old days, specially in our villages. We intend to draw a faithful picture of these conditions in order to show in clear contrast the condition under which he lived in the old days. By a comparison of these conditions we shall be able to understand the situation and to diagnose the real causes."

In Chapter five of this part describing the changes which have taken place the author rightly says that "the greatest injury has been done under the new order of things to Indian Cottage industries and handicrafts which have been killed one by one and hundreds of thousands of artisans have been thrown out of work and have become field labourers or petty cultivators. The skill of ages has been swept away.... Tinsels have taken the place of finely chiselled and finished articles of Indian workmanship. Worthless articles of foreign make have dumped the Indian markets and put the Indians out of pocket to the tune of crores of rupees. The economic ruin which has overwhelmed India is without a parallel in the history of the world. Machine-made cheap articles imported from distant countries are taken to the very door of the villager, with the result that the services of Indian artisans are no longer required. The farmer's wife no more gins or spins.... In this way a very large number of people have been thrown out of employment, and the whole pressure has fallen on land. The population living on agriculture is daily increasing in India while in other countries it is on the decrease." Quoting the authority of the Royal Agricultural Commission, the author says, that in the short period of thirty years there has been an increase of 21 per cent. in the number of people living on agriculture. "Nobody can believe that India is unfit to industrialise itself. If there is a determined will on the part of the people and Government help and patronage are forthcoming in sufficient amount, Indian can succeed with a short space of time" in diverting the people from agriculture to other industries.

In Part III the author draws attention to some of the main peculiarities wherein the agricultural industry differs from other industries, so that the reader may be able to understand the complications involved in this important business. He deals in the second Chapter with forces affecting agriculture. Among the important factors which contribute to the well-being of agricultural industry, the author naturally gives the first place to the system of land tenure. But as he has dealt finally with it in the last Chapter it will be best to deal with it there.

In the Chapter that follows the author deals with the subject of the fiscal organisation of the country, and in particular with the question of assistance to agriculture by means of tariffs and subsidies. Among the factors affecting prices, he first draws attention to the currency of the country. The Committee which was recently appointed in England to report on the question of the stabilisation of agricultural prices took their stand on the basic proposition laid down on this subject by John Stuart Mill when he said that "an increase of the quantity of money raises prices and a diminution lowers them, is the most elementary proposition in the theory of currency and without it we should have no key to any other." Commercial men in India have been protesting for many years against the artificial control of the currency, against the method which the Government has adopted to maintain the artificial price of the rupee. In the course of five years—from 1926 to 1930, there was a contraction of currency to the extent of 99.67 lakhs. Owing to this the agriculturist, for no fault of his own, has had to suffer enormous loss year after year. The interest of the cultivator demands, rightly says the author, that the Government should introduce a gold coin for circulation in the country, and for the automatic exchange value of converting the coin of one country into the coin of another. If there is a gold coin in circulation, no artificial method is required to control the exchange value of the coin." "If no gold coin is to be introduced, then exchange should be based on the price of silver in comparison to the price of gold." The Government was wrong in fixing the ratio of the rupee at 1s. 6d. when the whole country wanted it to be placed at 1s. 4d. "In this way the agriculturists are forced to sell their articles much cheaper than they would otherwise have had to do. The pegging of the rupee to the pound, and not allowing it to find its own level, also injures the agriculturist. Thus India has to sell goods worth Rs. 20 to every foreign country to get a pound in exchange, while Rs. 13 annas 4 only worth of goods has to be exported to England to pay the same price.... Thus India is handicapped at every step in the price of her agricultural commodities, resulting in a heavy fall in prices and consequent loss to the cultivator."

The agriculturist also suffers by the bank rate being kept unduly high in India. "It is not allowed to go down here below 5 per cent., while in other countries it is allowed to go down normally to 3 per cent.".... "If the bank rate is allowed to go down, the rate of interest at which money is made available to the agriculturist will also be lower." Government borrowing also adversely affects the prices of agricultural commodities. "The Government borrows money at a very high rate of interest, and thus all savings of the country flow into the Government treasury and are neither used for new industries nor for agricultural improvements." The floating of the loans at harvest time

when the cultivator requires money in abundance to make his payments, also raises the rate of interest and reduces the price of agricultural products and should therefore be avoided. "To maintain normal conditions currency should expand at the time of harvest, while it should contract afterwards when the demand has fallen. The agriculturist can thus be saved the loss which he has to suffer by selling his harvest at a low price." As regards tariffs, "the recent growth of sugar factories in the country is a clear proof that tariffs if properly worked can help the industries to a great extent."

The author reviews the state of general and agricultural education in the country and deplores that it is both inadequate and inefficient. He shows that this fact lies at the root of all want of progress among the people. Similarly he deals with the economic organisation of the agricultural industry, the co-operative methods of purchase and sale, co-operative credit, agricultural credit societies and co-operative insurance, and makes valuable suggestions for improvement in all these directions. His opinion regarding the improvement of live-stock and an adequate supply of unadulterated and cheap milk deserves particular attention. He points out that "the consumption of milk in this country—where milk and milk products were found in abundance not very long ago—is the lowest in the world and infant mortality is the highest, and recommends measures by which plenty of good and cheap milk can be made available to the people.... The Royal Agricultural Commission have gone into the details of this question and they have recommended that "with a view of providing the urban population with the supplies of milk for which they ask, which the vegetarian habits of many make so necessary for health, and of which growing difficulties have deprived them, municipalities should take such action as may be required to augment and cheapen the milk supply." "Most of the existing defects (in the system of dairying) are attributed, says the author, to the increase in the number of useless animals that are allowed to breed. But this accusation is hardly tenable." To be practical, in view of the fact that the "Hindus have a religious faith in the sacredness of the cow, the idea of disposing of the old and useless cattle by killing them should be abandoned for ever. The problem is to be solved by producing more fodder and by providing abundant pasture."

The Chapter which deals with the organisation of transport, the expensiveness of the railways, the very harmful effect which their unreasonably high freight charges have on the movement of agriculture produce from one part of the country to the other, the necessity for the reduction of those charges, the advantages of water transport, the provision of power and wireless and help to subsidiary rural industries and the development of afforestation is full of useful suggestions. So is the Chapter on the development of State or voluntary organisation to provide the necessary central and local machinery for carrying out the various measures of agricultural policy. The author earnestly pleads that there should be a definite agricultural policy of the Provincial Governments as well as of the Government of India, and the prosperity of the cultivator ought to be their first concern. Officers of the Government ought not to look upon a public critic as an enemy; "they ought to make friends with him and try to benefit by his advice."

After dealing in the first three parts of the book in a thorough-going manner with the numerous causes which contribute to make the Indian peasant poor, the author puts forward in the last part, the remedies which he has to recommend to replace his poverty by prosperity. He reaffirms the basic proposition that it is the primary duty of every people and every Government to take measures to protect the cultivator, and urges that it is absolutely necessary for us to chalk out a programme which may help in improving the condition of the cultivator. In the first Chapter of this part, the author points out the major remedies by which the disaster is likely to be averted. Without in any way committing himself to the programme laid down by *Soviet Russia* for the welfare of her own people, the author commends the spirit of national self-help in which the work was taken up there. "The nation decided once for all to launch upon a certain programme known as the 'Five Year Plan', and every man and woman was ready to co-operate with the Government to work it out." "The first thing, therefore, which is essential to pull the people out of the depth of their present degradation is the will and determination of the people themselves to work out their own destiny." We are perfectly sure, says the author, that in spite of the hindrances, drawbacks and shortcomings, if the nation once embarks upon any fixed programme of development, an era of prosperity can be easily ushered in.... If the nation takes up the work in right earnest, the Government will have to co-operate with it. "The next important thing to do is to help cultivators to shake off the lethargy and inactivity which fatalism creates in them. If a nation or a section of the people loses self-confidence, there cannot be any incentive to improvement. The prolonged miserable condition of the masses has forced them into a belief which makes them inactive even when they know how to improve. An optimistic state of mind is therefore the first thing to be created." We must assure them that nature has endowed them with all the energy, intelligence and resources which are necessary for man to become prosperous, and if they are further assured of help and co-operation by their educated brethren, there is no doubt that their outlook on life would become hopeful and bright, and half the battle would be won. "Pessimism and fatalism have killed hope in their breasts and benumbed their spirit. Let us infuse hope and courage into them, let us teach them the lesson of self-confidence.... If we do this there is no reason why our farmers should remain for long the play things of fate, victims of the demon of despair, inert, inactive and without faith in their future." To create such an atmosphere of hope, "a strong organisation would be necessary for a country-wide propaganda and workers will have to contend against enormous odds and spirit killing disappointments." The author makes it clear that he does not aim at the revival of the old conditions of society.... "It is not practical politics now to ask the people to take to the old primitive methods of living.... Our salvation lies only in following the modern methods of the so called civilized world." To achieve this end the masses have to be taught the uses of organisation, which in modern civilisation is the first step to attain success in life.... "However strong you must be, you cannot stand against the organised world, if you are unorganised or disorganised." "Organisation does not necessarily require literacy or education but

it does require a practical training and perfect discipline. In order to be able to raise our head among the nationalities of the world, we must undergo that training and discipline first."

The fact has to be recognised that in face of the improvements made by other nations, India cannot support its present population on land alone. Besides, it is impossible in these days of international communication to close our doors against other countries.... And "the purchasing power of other countries is far greater than that of this country. This explains "why cereals and other articles necessary for food in this country are exported to other countries though a large number of people have to go without food in this country." The author emphasises what has repeatedly been said that "as long as India depends upon the supply of manufactured goods from foreign countries, she is bound to export agricultural products in lieu of the imports. This state of affairs cannot improve until industries are started in this country. The remedy therefore lies in this that a portion of the large population living on agriculture today must be diverted to other pursuits. The Famine Commission very forcibly urged this more than fifty years ago. Many others have repeated this advice. But little has been done to divert the population from agriculture to industries. Indeed in the period that has intervened, the population living on land has increased from 58 per cent. to 73 per cent.

The greatest obstacle in the way of the development of the industries in the past has been that India has been under the rule of a foreign Government "lacking in sympathy and caring very little for the interests of the industries of this country." With the help of its Government, Japan has achieved wonders in industrialisation within a very short period, and in underselling every other country in India. Notwithstanding the past, we have every hope, says the author, that the Government would come to the help of our national industries in the near future. But we should not remain idle in the meantime. We should try to stand on our own legs. It is possible for the people to start and organise some of the industries even without help of the Government. If proper efforts are made sufficient funds can be collected in every district that can profitably be invested in industrial concerns.... But this is only possible if we can create an atmosphere of patronage for goods manufactured in our own country to the exclusion of goods imported from abroad. The capitalist simply wants an assurance from the general public that the articles manufactured by him will be patronised and as soon as this assurance is forthcoming he will be ready to invest his money in industrial undertakings and to run any risks.... A country which has such a huge market for sale and purchase does not stand in need of help either from the Government or from other foreign countries. The only thing required is that there should be perfect determination on behalf of every son of the soil that he will purchase only those things which are produced in his own country even at some sacrifice and even if the articles are a bit clumsy, dear and less durable.... "If we decide upon this policy, all our economic ills are bound to come to an end, and a very large number of people will be diverted at once from agriculture to industries. There will be competition for land, rents will go down, prices of agricultural produce will

go up, and the agriculturist will be happy and prosperous. It is in self-interest that the cultivator should take a vow to purchase only those articles that are manufactured in his own country." The author rightly adds: "The cultivator, in adopting the principle of buying Indian goods, has necessarily to make greater sacrifices than his slender resources can allow. But he must be prepared to make them for in them alone is his salvation, and if he will not become a whole-hogger in Swadeshi, he is bound to go to the wall."

The author then draws attention to the need of education. "The first and the foremost necessity of a national uplift including the agricultural population is the 'education of the people in the three R's.' 'Compulsory primary education is the crying need of the people' and serious and earnest efforts should be made to satisfy it. This is the first and paramount duty of every state in the world." The Education Commission of 1880 strongly recommended that measures should be taken to extend elementary education among the masses. In 1893, the Government invited Dr. Volkmar to enquire into and report on the condition of agriculture in the country. He too recommended that general elementary education was the first essential need for agricultural improvement. Thirty-nine years have since then passed, but the Government has not done anything substantial to advance general education amongst the masses. According to the Census figures the percentage of literacy in India in 1921 was 12 among males and 1.8 among females. The Simon Commission noted that "so far as mere quantitative increase in the numbers under instruction is concerned, there has been a phenomenal advance since the inception of the reforms." There has been an equally remarkable increase in the expenditure on primary education since then. But the progress made is still very poor. On the other hand in Soviet Russia, according to the census figures of 1926, in the course of fourteen years, the percentage of literacy had risen to 65.5 for males and 36.7 for females. The Royal Commission on Agriculture rightly said in their report: "The figures of literacy and female education reveal in very striking fashion what are admittedly the weakest points in the educational position in India. To impart literacy is the essential object of education at the primary stage and little progress in rural development can be hoped for without it." The author makes a strong appeal to the people to promote primary education by their own effort. "To us it seems that inhabitants of this country have not realized so far that knowledge is more valuable to them than even food. If they once realized it all the money that they have so far contributed from public funds for the maintenance of Colleges High Schools and other costly institutions must have been utilised for primary education alone." "It is true that compulsory education cannot be brought about without the help of the Legislature, but as we have pointed out in several other places, public opinion has a force which is in no way inferior to the force of the Government.... We appeal therefore to all our public men of a political bent of mind, to whatever school of thought they may belong, that their first aim should be to spread literacy among the masses.... "In a voluntary campaign of a national awakening, let every school in the village be flooded with scholars and let the adult males and females go to the nearest priest and ask him to educate them. 'If every temple, mosque, church, dharamshala and

chaupal is converted for a short time into a school, we can educate our people in no time. If the educated people who are out of employment earnestly take to this task, they will earn the gratitude of the future generations and will get sufficient food and clothing. It requires an effort from all and sundry to make such a movement a success. If the Government or the people decide to achieve a certain object, all their difficulties will melt away. We are perfectly sure that all other improvements must be preceded by removing this blot of illiteracy from the face of the nation'." It is devoutly to be hoped that a nation-wide campaign will soon be organized to secure the blessings of literacy to the people.

In the final Chapter of the book the author puts forward what he regards as the most important direct remedies for solving the problem of the peasant's poverty. "That problem is how to make the farmers produce a larger amount of the right sort of food and to see that a sufficient portion of it is made available to them for satisfying their hunger without depressing the market further.".... As things stand at present a farmer is a producer, a seller, a labourer and an investor combined. To expect all these qualifications in an illiterate farmer, with no knowledge of business principles, is to expect the impossible. "That being so what is required is to make men having business instinct to co-operate with the farmers. The two must be yoked together in willing comradeship so that the one may complement the work of the other."

Russia is said to have solved the question by taking possession of the entire land and making every body work and providing him with food and clothing. This idea appeals to not a few people in this country also, "but we feel (says the author) that this is no solution of the problem. In the first place you snatch away the very same profession from the poor man whose condition you want to improve and leave him at the mercy of the officers of the State.... The basic principle of the Russian method seems to be that a few of the highly placed officials work and think for the whole nation, and the independence of action of the individual finds no place in the scheme." It is something like making a man the tool of another. In a country like India no body can agree to give this vast power in the hands of the officials.... The very idea of turning human beings into machines—working at the will of others—is repugnant to an Indian mind. According to Indian conception God made everybody to be independent in his actions. Such a scheme, is therefore impracticable and it does not appeal to us.... We cannot agree that the farmer should leave the high position in Society which he once occupied on account of his independent profession, but at the same time we do not want to see him starving.

"Our aim should be to produce more food material than we are doing now. But the surplus production should be made available to the farmer for his consumption and should not be allowed to depress the market." "With this idea in view we suggest that educated, intelligent and sincere people should popularise and organise collective and mixed farming among the cultivators."

By "collective farming" the author means that the whole village

should be divided into groups of farmers performing all their operations together. Farmers who have their holdings adjoining should combine together for better farming and should pool all their resources together, so that the unit of one farm may be sufficiently large and the present small holdings which for various reasons do not receive sufficient attention may be better cultivated. Each farmer should be paid in kind in proportion to his work and investment. By doing so the want of consolidation of holdings will altogether disappear. Facilities for farming such as better implements and irrigation, etc., will be easily provided. Money which is not easily available at present will be made cheap on account of better security and the intelligence and experience of different persons will be pooled together." In addition to these economic advantages, "there will also be a number of indirect benefits derived from this method. People will learn the value of organisation, they will command better markets, will be able to undertake to supply better qualities of crops, and will look after their children's education and training better. The curse of litigation will mostly disappear and the future of the people will become brighter and more helpful."

"By mixed farming" the author means the combination of dairy-ing with farming. This will give a chance to the cultivator of utilising dairy products as food.... Even if he uses only separated and butter milk for his own food, that will be more nourishing than the diet he is using today. Farm manure, the best of its kind, will be available in abundance, and will give sufficient occupation to the farmer and his family. Mixed farming and collective farming are inseparable, the one requires the other for its success. The details can be worked out in accordance with local conditions. This is the most important practical remedy the author has suggested. The author has reason to feel confident, and I entirely agree with him, that if the scheme is worked out in right earnest, with honest and self-less workers, it is bound to succeed and it will remove most of the ills of the poor farmer. I strongly recommend that a properly organised endeavour should be made to carry out this scheme.

The next direct remedy suggested by the author is a radical reform of the system of land tenure. He powerfully pleads that "the land tenure system should be devised in such a way that the agriculturist may feel sure that a sufficient portion of the produce got from the soil is left to him".... "The first and foremost aim of every well-wisher of this country should therefore be that the farmer who toils and works at the farm gets a sufficient return for his labour. The nation which disregards the first principle of providing enough for those who produce food and clothing for the nation can never hope to prosper." Every reasonable man will endorse this view. The author complains that under the British rule the zamindar was for the first time recognised as the owner of the land. He points out a number of defects of the system in which the cultivator is not the proprietor of the land and makes a powerful plea for the creation of peasant proprietors. The zamindars and the cultivators hold opposite views on the question of private ownership in land, and being highly controversial, it will require the most careful consideration. It is important to note however that though the author is an ardent advocate of peasant proprietorships, he wants "No Bolshevism" in this country. He says: "We are not an

advocate of expropriating the landlords from their vested interests which they have acquired in the land by inheritance or by purchase; nor is it a practical proposition. We respect the principle of individual ownership, but at the same time we believe in the sacrifice of individual interests for the benefit of the country or the nation. We are of opinion that a persistent and continuous effort should be made both by the Government and the people to confer proprietary rights on the cultivator. With Government help the problem can be easily solved." The author suggests a number of ways in which the cultivator may be helped to obtain money to purchase the land he cultivates, through courts, on payment of a reasonable price. He suggests that "the Government can provide money at a cheap rate of interest at least in the case of the solvent cultivators. The price of land may be distributed over a number of years and the tenant may be allowed to pay this amount by instalments along with his rent, so that at the end of a fixed period he may become the proprietor of the land he cultivates. A number of other ways can be devised to confer proprietary rights on the cultivator without in any way expropriating the rights of the zamindar." In view of what has taken place in other countries this question will call for more and more attention in the future. The best interests of the country demand that every zamindar and every one who has to take any responsible part in the administration of this country in the future, and the representatives of the peasants, should all make a dispassionate study of this great question, and approach it, when the time comes for a solution, with good will on all sides and a desire to do justice to every interest concerned. In the special conditions of this country and the circumstances in which it is placed, it may be some time before a general agreement will be reached on the principle of helping the cultivator with money at very cheap rates to acquire the land he cultivates from his landlord. And even when that has been done, the practical financial difficulties in the way of giving effect to the policy may require a long time to be got over. But in the mean time many less radical but important measures can be taken with the co-operation of at least the majority of zamindars and the help of the legislature, which can considerably strengthen the position of the cultivator, and I have no doubt that a study of this book, even where the reader may not agree with the author, will prove helpful in that direction.

Much improvement in agriculture can be brought about with the help of irrigation facilities and manure. Irrigation facilities either by canal or by any other means are the first requisite of every improvement.... All attempts to increase revenue at the expense of the cultivator should be stopped and stopped once for all. Canal rates should be fixed in accordance with the price of the crop and the cost of cultivation. "There are many wells in the country, but there being no cheap motive power to lift water from them, most of them are not used at all. The first and the foremost programme for the people and the Government therefore is to provide a net-work of wells with cheap pumping arrangement, and to improve the existing defects in the canal system so that water may be available to the cultivator in proper quantity and at proper times at a cost commensurate with the income that he gets from his fields."

The next pressing need of the cultivator is a larger supply of good and cheap natural manure. The efforts of the agricultural experts seems to be concentrated on the artificial manures and indigenous manures are neglected. Freight charges on bone meal and potassium nitrate or nitric earth on different railways are higher than the rates charged on artificial manures. But artificial manures are not likely to find favour with the Indian cultivator. The farm yard manure is the best form the practical point of view to the Indian agriculturist. It is quite a simple manure and is complete in itself. The Government experts also believe in it.... India is mostly a vegetarian country and consequently its salvation lies in mixed farming. All our energies should have been directed to the making of a mixed farm a paying proposition. It would have automatically solved our manure problem."

The last but not the least important of the direct remedies is the introduction of rural industries in villages. Spinning and weaving naturally occupy the first position. Next to these, which can give useful occupation to the largest number of people in this country, comes the dairy industry. In case the mixed farming scheme is not worked up, the dairy industry should find the first in the economic uplift of the country. There is a great future for it in the country, "but it is essential for its success that measures should be adopted to make the adulteration of milk and milk products penal. "Facilities for transport and for cold storage should be provided on railways, and the question of improving the breed should then be taken up." The author rightly attaches the highest importance to this industry in the economic uplift of the cultivator.

Canning and preserving of fruits and vegetables is another important industry. India imports canned and preserved fruits of the value of Rs. 66 lakhs a year. This industry and many small industries like soaps, gluc, pearl-barley, etc., and horticulture and sericulture are other important and valuable occupations which can be taken up by the cultivator and can add materially to his slender resources. "All these industries require a persistent effort on behalf of the leaders of public opinion and of the Government. Big agricultural industries like sugar-making, manufacturing starch, paper boards, etc., can be started amongst the villagers themselves with financial help from the Government and with the expert knowledge of Government officials at their back."

I have found this book so interesting and instructive that, having started to write a brief foreword, I have been led to give the reader a foretaste of the book by drawing attention to the main proposition put forward by the author. Without endorsing every opinion expressed by him, every one who will read this book will agree that the author has rendered conspicuous public service by dealing with this momentous question of the poverty of the Indian peasant in the very practical and comprehensive manner in which he has done it. I very much hope that this powerful presentation of the case of the cultivator will be the means of creating a strong public opinion in favour of a nation-wide movement for improving his lot in many of the ways which the author has suggested, and in such other ways as the combined wisdom and experience of those engaged in the study of the science and practice of

agriculture may suggest. The time seems to be propitious for such a movement. The growing improvement of the agriculturist is causing great uneasiness in the public mind. Various ideas seem to be in the air as to how to improve his position. What Soviet Russia is reported to have achieved with its Five Year Plan seems to have touched the imagination of even officers of the Government. Some of them have been talking of organising a Ten Year Programme for the uplift of the peasant. The other day the Governor of Bombay exhorted scouts to take up the work of village uplift. A similar movement is going on in the Punjab and in the United Provinces. It looks as if this is a centrally inspired movement. Every effort on the part of Government to ameliorate the condition of the cultivator must of course be welcome. Indeed in many essential matters Government, or the Government and the Legislature, alone can secure relief or bring about improvement. But it should be remembered, in the words of the author, that "the first thing which is essential to pull the people out of the depth of their present degradation, is the will and the determination of the people themselves to work out their own destiny." Whatever else is done, the spirit of self-help and self-reliance should therefore be fostered among the people. Where the help of the Government or of the Legislature, or of both, is necessary, it should be given without condescension. But the peasant should be encouraged to do as much as he can for his own salvation by his own effort, by co-operation with his fellow cultivator. For his success he will need all the good will and support of the zamindar as well as of the representatives of the Government. Every effort on his part in the direction of self-help should be looked upon with sympathy and not with suspicion. The movement should be regarded as an essentially economic movement.

I strongly recommend that every thoughtful Indian, and every one interested in the administration of this great country, should carefully study this book and contribute his quota of thought and effort to brighten the lot of his brother—the kisan—who toils and moils, in rain and in cold, to produce the crops which give health and wealth to the 350 millions of this land, and should help him to attain his fair share of happiness and to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of his fellow-men in the world.

MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA.

INTRODUCTION.

PEASANTS' POVERTY

"Since the state must necessarily provide subsistence for the criminal while undergoing punishment not to do the same for the poor who have not offended is to give a premium on crime." (J. S. Mill.)

The high palatial buildings in big cities, furnished with all paraphernalia of luxurious living and equipped with the most modern scientific devices for making life comfortable cannot make us realise the real condition of the masses in this vast continent. The huge congregation of people seen in our cities with hustle and bustle of trade as well as the flow of money in currency and exchange is no index of the prosperity of the people. To understand the economic condition of the agriculturists and their dependents who form the bulk of the population, viz. 73.9 per cent, we have to go to their homes in the villages. The real Indian nation lives in rural areas and the prosperity of the country depends upon the prosperity of these areas. In these pages we intend to give an account of the miserable condition of the agricultural classes in our Indian villages as well as to suggest remedies and indicate the lines upon which improvement in their condition is possible.

Let us now turn to the villages, mix with and live amongst the villagers. Let us see with our own eyes the real difficulties under which they are living. We shall find that village life is altogether different from city life and city people can have no idea of the conditions under which people in villages have to live.

RURAL ROADS AND PEASANTS' DWELLINGS

There are no means of communication to take you to a vast majority of these villages except rickety and jolting, slowly moving bullock-carts which give you a jerk at every 5 steps that makes your bones rattle and ache. You cannot avail yourself of a horse conveyance, not even of that jolting jenny the ekka or of a horse tonga so much in evidence at the railway stations. A buggy is too delicate a thing to withstand these rough and uneven paths. A motor car is altogether out of the question. There are no metalled roads and you have to travel by tracks full of dust and dirt during the summer and of water and mud during the rains. You have to travel in the scorching sun there being no welcome shade of trees on the way to afford you shelter. When at last you arrive at your destination profusely perspiring and feeling thoroughly unhappy, you find houses of mud with thatched roofs to welcome you. In Bengal, even mud walls disappear and are replaced by walls made of sticks covered with palm leaves. If continuous attention is not paid towards the repairs of these houses, they are sure to come down on the advent of rains. The roofs are leaky to a degree and it is a sight never to be forgotten to see the poor people removing their cots from one leaky spot to another. The walls of the houses are plastered with mud. Lime for white washing is not available and even when available, it is a luxury which the poor

people cannot afford. Even well-to-do people in the villages have to remain satisfied with a coating of cow dung mixed with red or yellow earth. The kerosene or the electric lamps are things unseen and unheard of. Even the humble kerosene lamps and the lanterns are a thing of luxury. They use earthen lamps in which mustard or neem oil burns giving a faint and flickering light which serves only to make darkness more visible. In some places kerosene oil is burnt in earthen or tin pots to drive out darkness from the low roofed thatched houses, but their smoke and soot fill the latter in no time and make the air unfit for inhalation. Electric fans of course there are none, even the old old punkha hung down from the ceiling is not to be seen, and for relief from the hot and close atmosphere they have to depend upon air currents and breezes, the universal fan provided by nature herself. The only piece of furniture that you find is the charpoy which does duty for a chair, cot and numerous other things.

SANITARY CONDITIONS

A raised mud platform is a necessary adjunct to a house and is used for sitting, sleeping upon and for various other purposes. There is no arrangement for fire places to warm the houses in winter, nor for chimneys to draw off the smoke rising from the *chula* at the time of cooking food. Add to all these discomforts the dirty and highly insanitary practice of tying cattle in the same room in which these men sleep, and think of the injury to their health which this practice must cause on account of there being no arrangement for ventilation. There are no windows in the houses. The floor is kachcha on which the inmates squat. They can thus neither protect the occupiers from the awful heat of the Indian summer nor from the biting winds of the winter. If you will look at the surroundings of these houses you will be simply startled. The lanes are never swept and all kinds of dirt and refuse collect in them to turn them into stinking cess-pools in the rainy season. There is no system of drainage and all the dirty water from the drains of the houses is discharged into the lanes and percolates into the soil. You will find manure pits close to the dwellings and sometimes even in the none too big court yards. Near the site of the village you will find a few ponds full of dirty water, colonised by mosquitoes spreading death and disease around. The habit of the people of easing themselves on the banks of these ponds on account of water for washing their parts being within easy reach, renders them more dangerous than they would otherwise be. All the night soil on their banks is washed off into them in the rains. The pigs wallow in them. It is this water which the cattle of the village generally drink. It is perhaps the reason why cattle disease is so common in the villages. The village dhobi washes the clothes in them and sometimes men also have no objection to bathe in them. And now you can realise what it means to live in such houses and among such surroundings in which a European will not like to keep even his pigs.

METALLIC WEALTH OF PEASANTS

Love for ornaments among Indian women is proverbial. There are a few ornaments the wearing of which is considered indispensable for married women. Even these are denied to some. Gold ornaments

with the exception of perhaps a nose-ring are rare even among the well-to-do people. Some fortunate women have a few silver ornaments. Women of the poor have to remain contented with ornaments of bell-metal. A large number has to go without them even. The utensils used are generally earthen and those who can afford brass ones are deemed quite fortunate. A small grinding mill, the "chaki" as it is called, is a necessary thing in every house, which the ladies of the household use every morning for grinding corn for their daily use. The total wealth of a villager consists of one or two bullocks, a few cheap agricultural implements and a few utensils of daily use.

PEASANTS' FOOD AND RAIMENTS

If we look to the food they eat, barring Bengal, it is mostly vegetarian. Even in Bengal the peasant class does not eat meat diet. It eats fish because it is the cheapest food available. The only basis of selection of food is cheapness. Peas, gram, barley, sorgham and millets are their ordinary food. A gruel made of parched grain mixed with water is generally what the poor can afford to satisfy their hunger with. In order to make it palatable, they put in a pinch of salt and pepper; sugar of course they cannot afford to have. In Bengal and southern parts of the country the worst kind of rice is the staple food of the agriculturist. He may cultivate wheat and may be exporting a large quantity of it out of the country but his poverty does not allow him to use it himself. Ordinarily he does not use vegetables, it is only at ceremonial occasions that this luxury is indulged in. For a man living on a vegetarian diet milk is quite essential to give sufficient nourishment. But in modern days of development every inch of ground is brought under cultivation, the majority cannot afford to keep milch cattle and even those who keep them, cannot afford to use milk or butter for their food and have to sell them and the only thing that remains to them is skimmed milk. You will be struck with their clothing at the first sight. In the hot weather the majority of men will present themselves clad in a loin cloth only, the children between 8 and 12 years of age with a strip of cloth which is just enough to cover their private parts and those of a younger age clad in nature's garb. In winter the number of those that have blankets or quilts is not large. Most of the males have got only a shirt and *chadar* of khaddar and the females a wrapper and a shirt of the same material. But kindly nature comes to the aid of these people also who are poorest of the poor. The furnace of the sugar cane mill or an *alao*, a burning heap of cow-dung cakes and faggots, etc., provides them with its generous heat and they pass the greater part of the night basking before it. In some cases even this insufficient raiment is torn and tattered.

MEDICAL AID AND HEALTH

When they fall ill, there are no doctors, Hakims and Vaides to treat them. If they happen to come to the city hospitals maintained from taxes realised from them, they are not received well and nobody looks after them. There are no health officers to advise them on sanitary methods of living, with the result that the vitality of the people is daily decreasing and mortality has increased enormously. If you look to small children you will be struck with their small sunken, lack-lustre eyes and protruding bellies due mostly to enlarged spleens. They look pale and unhealthy, and a majority die in their infancy. A very responsible officer of the

Government while giving evidence before the Royal Agricultural Commission stated, and it is perfectly correct what he said, that more people died of malnutrition in this country than by famine or epidemic. The main cause of death is malnutrition and want of sufficient nourishment in the vegetarian diet generally used. It is a law of nature that among the poor classes the rate of birth is very high and in proportion the death rate also is high. This is why the average of life of an Indian is daily going down and compares very unfavourably with the average life of the inhabitants of other countries. In India the expectant age is 22.59 years for males and 23.31 for females while in England it is 46.04 for males and 50.02 for females.

SOCIAL AMENITIES

There are no post offices within easy reach and there is hardly one school for every three villages. There are no libraries, no clubs and no society; the whole life is monotonous, prosaic, dull and full of drudgery. There is no arrangement for recreation, and nothing to make life enjoyable. Life has only to be lived on account of the strong instinct to preserve it.

THEIR EARNINGS AND SAVINGS

The peasant wakes up early and labours hard from morn till night-fall. He does not care for the hot winds in summer nor for the bitter cold in winter. He has to work on his fields even when it is raining heavily. When the crop is ready for harvesting, the zamindar duns him for rent and the creditor attaches his standing crop in execution of his decree. His crop seldom reaches his house. What an awful condition! A cultivator who has worked the whole season in rearing his crop and has tended it like an infant, is forced to part with it either to pay the wealthy landlord or the greedy user and he cannot help it. Being thus deprived of his crop he begins anew and from the very next day he is obliged to take seed on loan and to secure other land on exorbitant rent. With borrowed bullocks and implements he works the next harvest but as soon as the crop becomes ready, he is again deprived of his earnings for payment of interest accumulated on sums borrowed on high rates in time of need or for payment of exorbitant demands of rent. This vicious circle goes on from one end of the year to the other with the unhappy result that the peasant who produces the grain does not even get enough to appease his hunger with and has to be satisfied with the worst kind of food giving the smallest nourishment. Not only that; it is the peasant class which produces cotton not only for the use of the mills in this country but also for export in large and considerable quantities to Japan and England but the poor Indian cultivator has to go insufficiently clad or even naked in the coldest months of the year. This is the very class which helps to keep the mills of other countries busy for 365 days in the year. The life of a cultivator in India is thus full of miseries and in spite of his hard labour he gets so little in return for it. Oh the pity of it ! ! !

THEIR INDEBTEDNESS

The Royal Agricultural Commission in their report on page 441 have rightly stated: "No one, we trust, desires to witness a continuation of a system under which people are born in debt, live in debt and die

in debt, passing on their burden to those who follow. That there are large numbers of hopelessly insolvent debtors in rural areas is generally admitted and we cannot regard it as making for health in the body politic that they should be allowed to remain without hope and without help." When a cultivator continuously finds that every time his harvest is ready, it is taken away by others he naturally sees no hopeful future in life and feels life as a burden. He neither takes any interest in life nor in his profession. His physique deteriorates, his mind becomes feeble and his mental condition does not allow him to carve out a better career for himself.

But fortunately India being a tropical country its climate is such that the requirements of the people are very few. The religious bent of mind of its people and their strong faith in fate has kept them content with their lot so far. The conditions however seem to have become intolerable and they are becoming conscious of their rights. If conditions do not improve, the day may soon come when the discontented Indian peasantry might be seen rising in revolt against the existing state of things. It is sincerely to be hoped that efforts will soon be made in all earnestness to ameliorate the condition of the Indian tenantry and God grant that the evil day may never dawn.

THEIR INSUFFICIENT FOOD

Mr. S. Kesava Iyenger an Indian author of eminence in his book "Studies in Indian Rural Economics" has put the condition of the Indian peasant in a nutshell. He remarks, "The rural population seemed to try to stifle appetite rather than to meet it properly, whether a commodity consumed was nutritious and health giving was hardly considered. Many made gruel in the morning, it meant less grain consumption. Rice beer was an universal food drink prepared at home with the same idea of managing with as small amount of food grain as possible." An English author has also rightly stated "They do not live but they only exist." A close study of the economic position of the cultivator in India has clearly shown that the Indian cultivator is the poorest man on the surface of the globe. Recently Dr. Harold H. Mann, the Director of Agriculture of Bombay, while retiring from service said: "Little could be done on an extensive scale until the Government and the social reformers recognised that the secret of the whole prosperity of the agricultural population was the filling of their stomachs. The empty stomach was the greatest obstacle to progress in India, and he wished to emphasise before he left the country that all efforts should ultimately be concentrated on filling the stomachs of the people." (The People Oct. 1928). Further he stated "My last message to the people of this land, to all social workers and to those in charge of the administration is to devise means whereby the cultivators might be given sufficient food."

Another English gentleman, Arnold Lupton in his book "Happy India", has very pathetically described the condition of the cultivators in the following words: "His mansion is a mud hut with a roof of stick and palm leaves; his bedstead, if he has one, consists of twisted sticks which raise his mattress, if he has one, six inches from the ground. He has no door or windows to his hut. He has a little fire place and cooking place outside. The sofa upon which he can recline in leisure moments is made

of mud outside his sleeping chamber. He has one garment round his loins and he has no other garment that he can wear whilst he is washing that one garment. He neither smokes nor drinks nor reads the newspaper; he goes to no entertainments. His religion teaches him humility and contentment, and so he lives contentedly until starvation lays him on his back."

The same is the opinion of the author of the well-known book "India and its problem" page 284-5:—"Millions of peasants in India are struggling to live on half an acre. Their existence is a constant struggle with starvation, ending too often in defeat. Their difficulty is not to live human lives:—lives up to the level of their poor standard of comfort—but to live at all, and not die, we may well say that in India, except in the irrigated tracts, famine is chronic epidemic."

Some days back a member of the English Parliament Mr. A. A. Purcell, writing in the "Daily Herald" said ("Leader" June 25, 1928) "One can however make certain definite statements that may enable others to visualise India in broad outlines. One can say, for instance, that of India's population the overwhelming majority are hungry from the day they are born till the day they die."

"As I have already said over two hundred and fifty millions of the Indian people are hungry all their lives, hungry with a gnawing, physical hunger. They do not get even enough rice to satisfy this hunger. All the time there are thousands who must be dying from sheer, slow, agonising, torturing starvation." "From travels about India I have come back with this fixed certitude in my mind looming large and terrifying over and above all other matters and problems—*the trouble, with India is a stomach trouble basically, primarily.* All the politics, constitutional issues, caste and religious questions fade into insignificance beside this terrible economic problem. I would give any thing to know that all these men, women and children had just a few extra grain of rice each day. A penny a day increase in the family income would mean a tremendous improvement, in the standard of living of the Indian tillers."

QUANTITY OF FOOD PER HEAD AND ITS QUALITY

Mr. Arnold Lupton, author of "Happy India" quoted above on page 143 of his book has calculated that the quantity of food consumed by an Indian is far below the quantity of food consumed by the people of other countries. He says "If we take the actual weight of all the grain crops in the year 1919-20 and divide it by population we find that if it was equally divided there is just enough food for people to live on—that is to say, there is enough to give 2 lbs. a day of grain to every man, 1½ lbs. to every woman and 1¼ lbs. of grain to every child and old people with 1¾ lbs. in every family of five persons."

The above calculation is based upon the understanding that the entire quantity of food consumed is divided proportionately amongst the human beings only but in reality this is not the case. A large quantity of food grains produced is consumed by cattle and is used for seeds and it leaves a much smaller quantity for human consumption. The readers ought to understand that since 1919 when the above book was published, the population of India has gone up by not less than 20 per cent. while the area of food crop has practically remained the same, nor has

the average yield increased during this period. Professor K. T. Shah in his well-known book "Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India" page 252, after making a very complete calculation of the total food available in the country remarks:—"The Indian people are underfed. The consequence is obvious and unavoidable. Either one in every three individuals must go hungry; or what is much more easy, insidious and injurious, every one must cut one out of every three meals necessary to him. This inevitably becomes the common practice, and the consequence is the progressive deterioration in physique and energy that renders additional production with a view to make up for the deficit increasingly more and more difficult. This vicious circle is complete. The Indian people are, relatively speaking, debilitated and inefficient because they have not enough food available. They cannot have enough food, they cannot produce sufficient for their requirements on the lowest standards, because they are lacking in strength and energy." The readers can thus very well imagine the conditions under which the masses are living today. It is not only the ordinary comforts of life that are not available to them but even to keep the body and soul together sufficient quantity is not forthcoming to the people of this unfortunate country.

W. S. Blunt in his book "India under Ripon" on page 245-46 has rightly remarked "We have given the ryot security from death by violence but we have probably increased his danger of death by starvation." The recent Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee for Bengal stated in their report on page 80 "The food of a cultivator is 10 per cent better than the Jail Diet." One witness stated before the Provincial Committee that the diet of the ordinary masses was worse than that of a prisoner.

INCOME OF INDIANS PER HEAD

Unfortunately no reliable calculation has been made about the income of the people of this country. We do not enter into the old controversial calculations on the point but content ourselves with the most authoritative publications of the Government.

In 1932, the Royal Commission known as Simon Commission consisting of Englishmen alone expressed an opinion which can in no way be considered to be prejudicial to the Government. In their report on page 334 they describe the economic condition of the people of India as follows:—

"The depth of poverty, the pervading presence of which cannot escape notice is not so easily realised. There has been no official estimate of income per head since 1901-2 when Lord Curzon stated in his budget speech that the average income per inhabitant of British India has been estimated at 30 rupees a year. Since the war several European professors of economics have tried to make an estimate. One of them has estimated the income per head of British India at 107 rupees in 1920-21, and at 116 in 1921-22; a second has arrived at a figure for the whole of India at 74 rupees, while a third confining himself to Madras alone for the 1919-20 calculated it at 102 rupees. Such estimates are based on inadequate data on account of the unsatisfactory nature of the material available. Even if the most optimistic of the above estimates is adopted the result is that the average income in India per head in 1922 was equivalent at the prevailing rate of exchange to less than £8, while the corresponding figure for Great Britain was £95."

Thus in 1931 according to the Simon Commission Report the income per head of an Indian was 1/12th of the income of an Englishman. The prices since then have considerably gone down and the income per head would be much lower than that mentioned by the Royal Commission. One should also observe that the above income per head quoted by the Commission includes the income of very rich people in the country and as admitted by the commission itself these figures cannot form reliable data for calculating the income of the peasant class.

The Government of India recently appointed a Banking Enquiry Committee which went into the questions relating to economic conditions of the people. The Central Committee published their report in 1931 and observed as follows:—"The income of the agricultural population per head when assessed will be much smaller. From the reports of the Provincial Committees and other published statistical information, the total gross value of the annual agricultural produce would work out to about Rs. 1,200 crores on the basis of the 1928 price levels. On this basis and taking into consideration the probable income from certain subsidiary occupations estimated at 20 per cent. of the agricultural income, and ignoring the rise in population in the last decade and the fall in prices since 1928, *the average does not work out at a higher figure than about Rs. 42 or a little over £3 a year. Thus the general poverty of the agricultural classes is a matter which is beyond dispute.*" (Italics are ours).

According to this calculation the income comes to Rs. 3|8|-. per head or less than 2 as. a day. It is most surprising as to how a man can manage to live on Rs. 3|8|-. a month. Even grain worth Rs. 3|8|-. would not be sufficient to ward off starvation and nothing would be left for purchasing other necessities of life. The appalling poverty of the cultivator is thus a reality and cannot be denied by any one in the country, and it is the duty of all well-wishers of the country, to find out ways and means by which the condition of the peasantry can be improved in order to save the country from the horrors of a social upheaval which is bound to come sooner or later if conditions remain as they are at present.



PART I
Fallacies Exposed.

ALLEGED CAUSES OF POVERTY

In the previous pages we have already described the deplorable economic condition of the cultivator and it is clear that it requires an immediate improvement. Before we begin to suggest remedies it seems essential that a thorough investigation into the causes of poverty is made. Numbers of officials and non-officials have tried to investigate the problem and have also suggested various solutions. In the light of these suggestions the Government and the non-officials have tried to do something but inspite of it the condition has gone from bad to worse. This can be only due to the fact that a correct diagnosis of the malady has not been made and consequently the remedies applied have so far proved ineffective. The so-called causes of the disease have been so incessantly dinned into the ears of the public from all sides specially from the Government benches in the Indian Legislatures, that it has come to believe them to be the true causes and it is therefore necessary to examine them carefully and see whether or not they are based on truth. In the following pages we mean to discuss the negative side of the question first in order to show that the diagnosis generally made is incorrect, and thereafter to investigate the real causes. It is also our intention to point out what other countries have done in similar conditions and then to suggest the remedies. This arrangement we hope will clearly bring out our point of view and help us in a dispassionate study of the subject. Eminent officials and non-officials alike have attributed the poverty of the Indian peasantry to the following causes.

1. The Indian peasant does not produce as much as he ought to and the low yield of his fields is due to the primitive methods of agriculture followed by him in ignorance of scientific and improved methods followed in other parts of the world. (2) Want of consolidation of holdings is another obstacle in the way of his getting a good yield. (3) Increase in population coupled with his disinclination to migrate to other less populated countries has caused the share of food per head to decrease proportionately and has resulted in starvation of the masses. (4) Scanty rainfall adds further to his difficulties. (5) His extravagance leaves him without capital and he cannot save anything to meet a lean year. (6) The exorbitant rate of interest charged by the money lender deprives him of a substantial portion of his income and keeps him immersed in debt.

These are the main causes which are believed so often to be responsible for the poverty of the people in this country and a number of proposals have been made on this assumption to afford relief to them. To a casual observer, the causes adduced may appear to be correct but a careful analysis of facts will show that most of these causes are really the effects and not the causes of the poverty of the peasantry and to find out the true causes we must look to something else.

CHAPTER I

Is the average yield of agricultural land in India low and is it due to the primitive methods of cultivation?

1ST ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

In nearly all official records and reports of various committees and commissions dealing with the subject, the poverty of the Indian agriculturist is said to be mainly due to the extremely low yield of agricultural land on account of the primitive and unscientific methods followed by him in comparison to the average yield in other countries. The non-officials also endorse this view and in order to encourage the adoption of better and scientific methods of agriculture by the peasantry, they are directing their energy to propaganda on these lines. It is undoubtedly a fact that during the last century in many countries the adoption of machinery and labour saving implements, the introduction of varieties of artificial manures and improved seeds and the discovery of remedies for pests and insects have increased the amount of produce per acre and it is also a fact that the Indian cultivator has stuck to centuries old methods and has not taken advantage of the improvements effected by science in agriculture. It is argued that while in other countries by the help of powerful machines a farmer ploughs the soil twelve inches deep, the Indian farmer with his small, light and clumsy plough merely scratches it to a depth of 3 inches and the plant is consequently deprived of food available to it in deeper layers of the soil with the result that its growth is stunted and it cannot yield as much as it would have done had it grown to its full stature. The Indian cultivator does not know the use of artificial manure. He does not even conserve the very valuable manure available to him in the shape of farm yard manure. He burns all this valuable manure and destroys the vitality of his soil and reduces its yield. There is no satisfactory arrangement for improving the quality of the seeds and even when an improved variety is brought to his notice he does not care to use it. Whenever his crop is attacked by pests he considers it a God-sent calamity beyond his control and he feels that nobody can avert the destruction of his crop brought about by a cruel fate.

The above reasoning appears altogether flawless to those who have never done farming themselves. An educated Indian has no experience of farming. He is an armchair economist and enamoured of syllogistic

reasoning. If the conclusion flows from the premises according to the laws of reasoning he is at once convinced that it is sound and can not be otherwise. He takes the correctness of the premises for granted.

1ST ALLEGED CAUSE EXAMINED

Factors to be Kept in View in Comparison

It is therefore necessary to examine the data assumed as correct. Let us see if the assumption that the produce of the soil in India is really the lowest in comparison to that of the soil in other countries is correct and if so, can it be said to be the main cause of Indian peasants' poverty. Those who argue from this assumption forget altogether that in order to compare the yield of one country with that of another, three factors have to be taken into consideration (1) Soil, (2) Climate and (3) Capacity of the farmer. If all these three factors are not similar in the two countries the comparison will be of no use.

For instance the yield from mango trees in this country can be said to be the largest as compared to the yield of this fruit in any other country. It is a well known fact that inspite of scientific knowledge and labour-saving machines, equipment, artificial manure, other countries have not been able to produce this delicious fruit in such abundance. If the amount of the yield from land be the only criterion we can safely say that the gardener in India is the cleverest of all. But it is obvious that the difference in the yield of this fruit is mainly due to the difference in the soil and the climate of the two countries. In the United States of America they get two crops of wheat every year while in India the climate is such that only one crop can be raised. What to say of other countries even in India itself we find that these factors are not the same in two provinces. In Bombay the soil deeper than three inches is stony and calcareous while in the U. P. and the Punjab the depth of the soil is generally good up to the water level. Both in the U. P. and the Punjab there are vast tracts of land full of sodium salts and are quite incapable of producing even a blade of grass. Government experts with all their knowledge, equipment and resources have tried their level best to make this soil productive but all their efforts have proved of no avail. Even where the land has been reclaimed the amount of expenditure incurred has not been commensurate with the income obtained. That being so the soil is mainly responsible for the low yield in these parts. Similarly uneven soils, hilly tracts and sandy areas do not give the same yield as ordinary soil. Without multiplying instances we can safely conclude that soil forms a very important factor in the yield of crops. If we take climate into consideration we come to the same conclusion. For instance in the U. P. and the Punjab owing to difference of climate the yield of sorgham as a grain crop is very low in comparison to Bombay where it gives two crops while in other parts of the country only one crop can be reared. This is why, Bengal is noted for its jute, the Punjab for its wheat and Behar for its cotton. In spite of attempts made by the department of agriculture, the same quality or the same yield of these commodities has not been obtained in other parts of the country. If we take into consideration the case of fruits, it will elucidate our argument still further. In spite of lavish expenditure in other parts of India to produce the best

fruit, Nagpur and Sylhet have not been equalled in the production of oranges; nor, Bombay and Madras in that of bananas. The third factor is the capacity of the farmer, i.e., his general knowledge and equipment. A small planter in C. P. with meagre knowledge and resources cannot get the same yield as the European planter of the place with ample knowledge and resources. Also, if a cultivator does not get seed at the proper time or cannot replace his bullocks in time or cannot get labour, the crop is bound to suffer. Similarly, an experienced farmer is likely to produce more than a raw ignorant one. Thus we find that the above three factors can considerably reduce or increase the average yield and consequently a comparison merely of the average yield of different countries takes us nowhere, nor can it give any indication as to the possibilities of a higher yield. In order, therefore, to arrive at sound conclusions as regards the quantity of produce in two countries it is necessary to eliminate the differences due to these three factors.

OLD COUNTRIES AND NEW

India and China are the oldest countries in the world and they have been following the art of cultivation from times immemorial. They have been producing crops from the soil for ages and naturally they have well-nigh exhausted the natural store of plant food in the soil. The other countries which have either recently been colonised by civilized men or where the cultivation has recently begun, the land contains more plant food and consequently is more likely to give bumper crops with the least exertion on the part of the cultivator. The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation in their report on page 19 recognised this important factor in the following words. They observe:—“The virgin soil of the new countries started with a reserve of fertility which could be drawn upon with relatively little expenditure of labour must produce more at a cheaper rate.” It is for this reason that the yield per acre is very high in the Punjab and Burma where large tracts of land have been provided with facilities of irrigation and brought under cultivation very recently. We know that in the Punjab wheat crop has once to be cut and used as fodder by the cultivator in order to avoid lodging. The methods of cultivation of the Punjab farmer are decidedly more clumsy and unscientific than those of the U. P. farmer. His plough is an implement which hardly goes two inches deep into the soil, he never cares to conserve moisture or apply manure. But in spite of all these defects he gets a very large amount of yield. This is all due to the fertile soil which has recently come under cultivation. Those who compare the average yield of India with that of Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, etc., forget the fact that in the latter countries the land has been brought under the plough since less than a century and it is no wonder if the yield is so high there.

AVERAGE YIELD OF INDIA COMPARED

Below we give a table of the average yield of India to compare it with the average yield of other countries. Unfortunately we have not been able to secure the figures of the average yield of different countries for all the crops grown in this country but the figures we have got are quite sufficient to elucidate our point of view.

AVERAGE YIELD OF CROPS.

Name of country.	Wheat Bushels.	Corn Bushels.	Barley Bushels.	Rice Pounds.
India	11.4	13.9	19.2	863
Canada	16.6	44.3	25.4	—
U. S. America ..	11.9	27.8	24.8	1076
Mexico	5.0	11.8	—	682
France	13.6	17.8	25.6	—
Spain	9.9	22.2	21.2	3270
Portugal	17.2	—	11.3	1222
Russia	10.1	17.4	12.8	—
Africa	10.9	—	12.3	—
Australia	9.8	19.5	9.4	—

AVAILABLE INDIAN STATISTICS UNRELIABLE

Before commenting upon the figures given above it is necessary to say a few words about the method of collecting agricultural statistics in India. The method adopted in getting official reports is not uniform in all the provinces. What is generally done is to get a report from the Qanungo as to how many annas in the rupee the lands in his pargana are expected to yield a certain crop in the current year. The Qanungo delegates the duty of making the estimate to the Patwaris under him who submit the estimates to him. Their estimates are all conjectural and not based on the estimates of the yield for each field. The estimates for all the parganas of the district are then tabulated together and the average for the whole district is arrived at. Thus in the Season and Crop Report of the Government we do not get the average for each pargana separately. The report therefore is not based on actual estimation and is therefore no safe guide to give us a correct idea of the actual state of things. In order to arrive at the actual amount of yield per acre crop cutting experiments were used to be performed in different places some years ago and the aggregate obtained from them was considered to be the average for the district or the province. Such experiments were conducted sometimes once in three years and at other times once every five years. These experiments suffered from the defect that they were not uniform in all the provinces. Even then the conclusions based on them were more reliable than the present reports. These experiments have mostly been abandoned and we have to depend on the altogether unreliable report of the Patwaris and Qanungos. Mr. Datt himself who made an official enquiry into the causes of the rise of agricultural produce complained that the official figures had their origin in the mere guess work of the village Chowkidar or other village official.

Even if we accept these reports to be correct it is apparent from the table given above that it is not a fact that in every case the produce per acre in India is the lowest. For instance in Mexico, the average yield of wheat and rice is far below that of India. Similarly, yield of wheat in India is higher than the yield in Portugal, Greece, Russia, Morocco, Algeria and other countries. The vague statement generally made by officials and non-officials alike that the yield in India is the lowest, is not correct.

CAUSES OF LOW YIELD

The maximum yield in India is not inferior to the maximum yield of other countries but the average yield is far lower. If we understand the significance of this important fact that in India it is the average yield only that is low and not the maximum yield the explanation of the problem becomes easy. In a country where the maximum yield is sufficiently high but the average yield is low, the anomaly can be explained by the fact that the right type of soil and climate is not generally available for the crop cultivated. If the conditions had been uniform, the maximum yield would have been uniform too. The Royal Agricultural Commission in their report on page 75 have pointed out the cause for the low yield in this country. They say, "Such land when first cleared, is far richer in combined nitrogen than is land entirely dependent for the process of nitrogen recuperation upon biological and chemical action in the soil under the influence of sun and weather and, unless freely manured, it must inevitably, and for many years in succession show an annual drop in fertility as each season's crops are produced and harvested. Again, it is evident that where increased pressure of population upon the land forces the cultivator to till inferior soils, there will occur a decrease in the average outturn." On account of great pressure on land all sorts of inferior soils are being brought under cultivation every day. In the province of Bombay you will find hardly a depth of more than 3 inches of good soil. The soil beyond that depth is stony and calcareous. While in other provinces barren, *usar*, calcareous and sandy soils are brought under the plough, the yield of such inferior lands when added to the normal yield brings down the average yield of the province though the average yield of good cultivators remains as high as the average yield in other countries. Land is a commodity which is a gift of nature and it is beyond human power to increase it. With the increase in the pressure on land inferior land is bound to be brought under cultivation and the average yield of the whole country is bound to be reduced. This is one of the main causes which explains the average low yield of crop in this country. There is yet another very important factor which further reduces the average yield. The average area per head of an agriculturist is on an average less than 2 acres and therefore a cultivator has to grow as many crops as possible on a small area. When the rains fail or there is insufficient moisture in the soil, one has to take the risk of growing a crop in adverse circumstances. The cultivator has to make a choice of either not growing a crop at all in the field which has not sufficient moisture to ripen the crop or to sow the crop in the hope of future rains. The Indian cultivator who does not calculate his own labour nor the labour of his bullocks for which he has no other occupation naturally decides to follow the latter course. Thus a very large area is sown, which would not have been done, had the holdings been larger than what they are today. On account of the large area under double crops also, the average is considerably lowered. There is yet a third reason. Irrigation facilities including wells and tanks are available only to 16 per cent. of the total area cultivated. There is no provision for irrigating the remaining 84 per cent. The average yield of a crop with irriga-

tion facilities is generally 50 per cent. higher than that of dry areas. According to the official report, in the United Provinces, the average yield of wheat from dry land for 1926-27 was 850 pounds while that of irrigated land was 1,250 pounds per acre, i.e., the average yield of irrigated land was 50 per cent. above that of dry land. Similarly in the Punjab the yield of wheat in dry land in the year 1926-27 was 576 lbs. while that of irrigated land was 997 lbs. For barley the average yield from dry land was 900 lbs. and 626, respectively, for the U. P. and the Punjab, while for irrigated land it was 1,350 lbs. and 1,004 lbs., respectively. We can therefore safely presume that if the entire cultivated area had irrigation facilities the yield would have been 50 per cent. higher. The provision for irrigation for this vast area is not an easy job. Neither the poor cultivator nor the already heavily indebted Government can undertake the heavy expenditure required. It has cost the Government Rs. 46 an acre to provide canal irrigation and calculating at that figure it can very well be seen that in the present circumstances the expenditure for providing the entire cultivated area with canal irrigation would be prohibitive. The existing canals are not sufficient to irrigate the area under them. It is a general complaint that enough water for irrigation is not available from the canals, on account of the paucity of water in them. It is evident that fields not receiving sufficient water cannot produce bumper crops and, in consequence, the average is bound to go down. Besides the causes enumerated above there are a few other minor causes which decrease the average yield but it is unnecessary to go into their details here. This much, therefore, is quite clear from the above that if the present yield is low it is beyond the control of the cultivator.

HIGHER YIELD WITHOUT HIGHER PROFITS NOT WANTED

The argument that the poverty of the cultivator will disappear with the increase in the average yield of agricultural produce is highly fallacious. The increase in the average yield has nothing to do with the poverty of the peasant. The increase in the yield can never mean a proportionate increase in the nett profit of the agriculturist. It is possible that the cost of cultivation may increase to such an extent that it may consume not only the income from the increased yield but something more and may result in further decreasing the profit of the cultivator. It is the increase in his profit which conduces to his prosperity. The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation rightly observed that "*the prosperity of agriculture is the prosperity of persons and not of acres*" p. 159 (Italics are ours). Another well-known author has similarly remarked that "the prosperity of the acres is not the prosperity of the cultivator". And it is literally true. A cultivator who gets a bumper crop by investing a large amount of money may be a loser in the long run while the profits of a small cultivator with less expenditure may be more. Suppose a cultivator gets 15 maunds of wheat per acre after spending Rs. 35 on the crop and sells it for Rs. 45. If he spends another Rs. 50 and produces 30 maunds of wheat instead of 15 and gets Rs. 90, he will be out of pocket by Rs. 5 an acre. The law of diminishing returns is nowhere better demonstrated than in the case of agriculture. Further, it is likely that by

increased production the prices may go down, but in the above instance we have not taken that fact into consideration. Instead of advising the cultivator to produce more he should be advised to produce as much as possible at the smallest cost to ensure the highest amount of nett profit. This is not only true in the case of India but it has been found to be so in the case of every country. England, which prides itself upon advanced and scientific agriculture, had to substitute grass growing for wheat cultivation because wheat sowing proved unprofitable. In England the area under the cultivation in 1873 was 18,160,071 acres but it came down to 14,478,013 in 1923, i.e., during the course of 50 years there was a decrease of 179,973 acres in the total area under cultivation. The matter was investigated and it was found that the main decrease had been in the case of wheat. In 1873 the area under cultivation of wheat was 309,380 acres while in 1923 it went down to 179,073. Though the average yield of wheat in England is far above the average yield of wheat in India yet when it did not pay the cultivator to grow it, he was forced to give it up and convert his land into pasture land. The plan which failed in England cannot succeed in India.

It is a well-known fact that by the increase in the total yield of a certain commodity specially agricultural produce the prices are considerably depressed and it does not remain a paying proposition to the cultivator. The fact has been very rightly pointed out in the United States Department of Agricultural Year Book for the year 1930 pages 589, 995, 997. It says, "The most single factor in the yearly variation in the farm price of potato in the past 9 years has been the variation in the size of the crop in the United States of America. The relation between production and price has been such that a small crop of around 320 million bushels brought a price of 1.80 dollars a bushel while a large crop of 449 million bushels brought a price of around 80 cents. indicating that the value of the large crop (followed at 35,200,000) shows considerably smaller than that of the similar crop (followed at 57,600,000)". An increase in production automatically causes such a fall in prices that whether it results from an increase in sown area or a better than usual yield, it brings no increase in the sums received by the farmer. Recently the Government of India has realised this fact and has started the propaganda that jute crop may be grown in the smallest possible area so that the price may not be depressed beyond economical limit. With the same idea in view different countries have to adopt artificial methods to control the prices. It is not an imaginary danger but a real one. Whenever and wherever investigation has been made, the result has always been that the increase in produce always lowers the prices of the commodity and consequently the nett profit is reduced rather than increased by the increase in yield. To give a very recent instance, on account of a bumper crop of sugar cane in U. P. in 1932 the prices of *gur* went down from Rs. 4 to Rc. 1 10as. a maund, a price never heard of before. The conditions would have been worse still but for the fact that the Government took steps to stop import of foreign sugar into this country by high tariff walls. Exactly the same conclusion is drawn by the committee on Stabilisation of Agricultural prices appoint-

ed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in England. They say on page 21 of their report, "Not only may an unusually abundant crop bring about the heavy fall in prices but effect on prices may be so great as to cause the gross value of a large crop to be less than that of a small crop. It has been calculated that American growers of cotton receive more for a crop of 9 million bales than for one of 13 million bales while American producers of wheat receive more for a crop of 700 million bushels than for one of 1,000 million bushels." The truth of the above statement is fully realized now as on account of over production in the world the prices of agricultural commodities are going down every day. It is not always a business proposition to produce more. We learn from newspapers that in several countries crops like wheat and cotton are being burnt in order to avoid the huge loss that the cultivators are likely to suffer. In another country coffee is dumped in the sea to avoid depression in prices. Thus it is quite clear that the aim of the well-wishers of the peasant should not be to make a propaganda to grow more and to produce more but the propaganda ought to be to grow only those articles which give him the largest amount of profit. Businessman's Commission on Agriculture rightly remark on p. 106 of their report: "Increase is in itself obviously desirable as it means greater efficiency of the industry, but, unless accompanied by a proportionate expansion of markets or a reduction in the number of farmers, it throws the relation between supply and demand out of balance. Increased yields per acre and per worker are likely to be accompanied by a more than proportionate fall in the prices of the products of the farm, because neither the demand nor the supply of farm products responds readily to changes in price." Further on they observe, "If yields per acre and per man grow steadily, the constant succession of improvements may keep the farmer permanently underpaid."

THE DUE CONDEMNATION OF PRIMITIVE METHODS OF AGRICULTURE

As to the question of the primitive methods employed in agriculture by the Indian cultivator, we believe that an all-round improvement is possible just as it is in every walk of life and everywhere in the world. Still we maintain that the Indian farmer is neither foolish nor ignorant as he is generally painted. We can safely assert without any fear of contradiction that he knows his business well. He has certainly not been in a position to study agriculture as a science nor has he been in any college or school, nor has he got a training on modern scientific lines in any foreign country yet he has the experience of generations behind him which has enabled him to pick up practical knowledge of his art. But his methods are based on scientific principles. J. Molison in his treatise on Indian Agriculture speaks as follows about him and the remarks that he made long ago hold true even today. He says, "To those who are sceptical I can say in parts of the presidency, cultivation by *means* of neatness, thoroughness and profitableness cannot be exceeded by the best gardeners or the best farmers in any other part of the world. This statement, I deliberately make and I am quite ready to substantiate it."

The same is the opinion of the Royal Agricultural Commission on this point. In a number of places in their report and in their appendix volume they have given a very good certificate to the Indian cultivator. On page 14 of their report they observe, "That in many places, the system of agriculture followed has attained a very high standard is a matter of common knowledge; the cultivation of rice in the deltas, for example, has reached a marked degree of perfection and the wisdom of many agricultural proverbs stands unchallenged by research. The careful terracing of the hillsides, the various methods of irrigation from wells and tanks, the construction of accurately designed channels from the streams to the fields and similar achievements in improving land discloses skill, ingenuity and patient labour. Although they affect but a small proportion of the area under crops and though the works are simple and their benefit narrowly confined to their immediate neighbourhood, their importance is considerable and it should not be overlooked when contemplating the larger works of Government. In the conditions in which the ordinary cultivator works, agricultural experts have found it no easy matter to suggest improvements." The Commission have admitted the excellence of the methods of Indian Agriculture in a number of places. It is not necessary to quote profusely but a few quotations bearing directly on the point will prove illuminating. In (Appendix volume page 90) they say, "Excellent crops of rice are obtained in many parts of the district (Orissa) and the evidence of good cultivation is seen in the ability of this part of the province to sustain a large population; in the district of Cuttack the population reaches a density of 565 to the square mile." Again on page 120 they affirm, "There is the cultivator of Gujarat *who is as efficient as any in the world* and the hard working and patient cultivator of the Deccan." (Italics are ours.) On page 305 they say, "He is, as has been said in many cases, excellent cultivator." Again on page 237 in the same volume they observe, "A very efficient system of dry farming is practised in the Deccan districts. Where the rainfall is scanty at best and uncertain always, and the water table is so low that irrigation from wells is not practicable, all crops are drill-sown and the efficiency of intercultivation in conserving moisture is very well understood. Every fifth year or so, the land is ploughed drawn by a team of six or more oxen, the object being to kill off *hariali* (*Cynodon Doctylon*) and other deep-rooted weeds by exposure to the hot-weather sun." Commenting upon the Indian plough the Commission have rightly observed, "We believe that the importance of conserving moisture has been the principal reason for the Indian cultivator's preference for the type of plough used by him; and, as he is too poor to afford a variety of implements, the ordinary Indian plough is the best type of general purpose implement for his needs. It does not work as a plough in the western sense, but as what in English practice is termed a 'Cultivator'. Although Indian soils would undoubtedly benefit at times by the use of an inverting plough, it is held that they still more often require the process known as cultivation for the purpose of conserving moisture. If therefore, for financial reasons, two implements cannot be purchased, the best single type is that which stirs but does not invert the

soil. By repeated use the Indian plough can reduce the soil to the same physical condition as is secured by the inverting implement in a single operation. Support is given to this view by the fact that the fallahens of Egypt, who are remarkably successful cultivators, adhere to an implement of the Indian type. The differing views have probably taken their colour from varying local conditions and it is clear that the only method by which the correctness of any one of them can be definitely established is by a series of careful experiments carried out over a term of years. It is eminently desirable that further attention should be given to this subject on which evidence based on experiment is lacking." Thus the readers will see that the Indian cultivator does not lack experience nor enterprise, nor his methods, though old, are unscientific. In spite of the fact that very high salaried experts are employed by the Government, they have very little to give him. It is a well-known fact that Indian graduates of an Agricultural College in India do not adopt farming as their profession and those who have cared to follow it have had to give it up after miserable failure. This in itself is a sufficient condemnation of the argument generally advanced that the introduction of scientific methods will give more profit to the cultivator. According to the well-known adage, "Example is better than precept." If officials or non-officials advocating this theory are convinced that the cultivator can really increase his nett profit by adopting better methods of cultivation, let them start their own farms and show by example instead of depending on mere propaganda.

This should not be taken to mean that we do not believe in further improvement of agriculture. We do believe that improvement is possible but we maintain that the increase in profit of the cultivator will be so small that it cannot be put as an argument that his misfortune is due to his lack of knowledge or his want of adopting the modern scientific methods. We further maintain that even if the increased yield would proportionately increase the present profit of the agriculturist, a very huge amount of investment would be necessary in order to achieve this end which the poor farmer would never be able to provide nor can the Government be expected to help him at such an enormous cost. If the cultivator cannot provide money for improvement it is the effect of poverty rather than the cause of it. It is therefore futile to think of vast investment failing which there is no chance of the cultivator getting more profits out of his land by adoption of modern and scientific methods. It is clear that the low yield in India, if it be admitted, that it is low, is not the cause of poverty nor the greater yield is likely to add to the nett profits of the farmer.

CHAPTER II

2ND ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

Is want of consolidation of holdings the cause of poverty?

For the last few years the argument has been very vehemently urged that the main cause of the poverty of the agriculturist in India is the want of consolidation in his holdings. His fields being scattered over a vast area he cannot attend to them properly. It would be easier and cheaper to cultivate a compact area than to cultivate an incompact one. It is further said that a large area of land which is now taken up by boundaries, could be used for cultivation and could enormously increase agricultural produce.

DIFFICULTIES IN CONSOLIDATION

It cannot be denied that a compact area is bound to give a better yield and help the cultivator to some extent but we do not agree that it is one of the main causes of the general poverty of the cultivator. No statistics are available as to how much area is likely to come under cultivation by the removal of boundary marks. Small plots certainly interfere both directly and indirectly in agricultural operations, but divisions will still have to be made for irrigation purposes; for differentiation of qualities and levels of land and for similar other considerations. The increase in area by consolidating the holdings would not be very large. It would in all probability not amount to more than 1 per cent. The difficulties due to fields being incompact are more imaginary than real. The difference would be hardly appreciable as the Indian agriculturist has ample time at his disposal. In accordance with the estimate of the Royal Agricultural Commission the cultivator has to remain unemployed for about 4 months in the year on an average. That being so, a little time saved by means of compactness of holdings would not help the agriculturist nor would that little saving be converted into money till some other employment for the spare time is discovered. Taking all these facts into consideration the utmost gain to the agriculturist cannot exceed 2 per cent. This addition to the agricultural income may afford some relief to him but it would not drive the wolf from his doors. If we go deeper into the causes which have been instrumental in reducing the size of the agricultural holdings in this country we would find that this want of consolidation is in itself an effect of something else. The pressure on land is increasing to such an extent that people are flocking to the profession of agriculture as the only means of livelihood, and every time that inheritance opens, a holding has to be sub-divided amongst the heirs of the deceased, in this way divisions have gone on multiplying for generations and would continue to do so as long as rules of succession remain what they are. Even if holdings are consolidated there is no guarantee that further sub-divisions would not destroy that compactness again. If the present rules of succession continue, the same unfortunate posi-

tion would arise again. The holding of a deceased person would be divided amongst his sons or other heirs. The holdings belonging to people who would give up the occupation of agriculture or who would be ejected from their holdings, would have to be re-allotted and would result in further sub-divisions, and it is more likely than not that a re-distribution would take place which would destroy their compactness. If the rules of succession are changed and system of primogeniture is adopted, the younger brothers who are deprived of their inheritance would naturally have to be recompensed by the eldest brother succeeding to the father's estate. In Burma the law of primogeniture is in force under which the eldest brother inherits the entire holding and he has to pay in cash to his younger brother by way of compensation. The Burma Provincial Enquiry Committee found that it was one of the main causes of the poverty of the Burmans. If such a law is enacted for the whole of India the result is likely to be the same. The land would hardly be able to bear the financial burden caused by such a change. Poverty will always stare the successor in his face while the other brothers will remain unemployed. In Burma, however, the question of unemployment is not so keen as it is likely to be in this country. There are vast tracts of forest which can be cleared up and brought under cultivation, but in India every inch of land has already been brought under the plough. So long as no solution is discovered for the prohibition of further division of a holding, consolidation if once achieved would not last long. As long as the present zemindari system remains in vogue consolidation of holdings would be a thing difficult of achievement and still more difficult of being kept permanent. The zemindar feels no interest in improvement of his land or his estate and his main business is to get as much money out of his estate as possible. In order to get the highest amount of rent he mixes up his inferior soil with land of superior quality and divides it amongst his tenants as it is not in his interests to let out these different qualities separately. There is another difficulty in the way of consolidation under the present zemindari system. No land-holder unless he is the sole proprietor of the village, holds compact lands and the partitions effected so far even through the courts, have failed to give effect to compactness. The result is that no tenant can get a compact piece of land from any zemindar and has to approach a number of zemindars if he is desirous of having a compact holding for cultivation.

In most of the villages the kind and quality of land is not the same throughout, nor there are similar advantages or facilities for irrigation for all kinds of land. A land near the *abadi* is more advantageous and so is the irrigated area superior to dry land. Similarly a sandy soil is much inferior to clayey loam. If the area is divided into compact blocks nobody will like to have inferior land that is unfavourably situated. If by legislation or any other method it is devised to divide the land into compact blocks by evaluating the land of different varieties with proper regard to the advantages due to situation or facility it will not satisfy the cultivator. Agriculture depends for its success to a great extent on natural forces. If it rains heavily some of the blocks may be damaged enormously and the man who is in possession of them may be ruined

altogether. Again if the rains fail, dry land having no facilities for irrigation may not yield a blade of grass and the cultivator may have to starve himself.

The difficulties enumerated above are real as experience has shown it. The revenue Administration Reports for different provinces will clearly show that it is only in the Punjab that some success has been achieved in the matter of consolidation of holdings while in other provinces inspite of Government propaganda it has not been achieved to any appreciable extent. Success in the Punjab can be attributed to three main causes. Firstly, a very large area of land is of similar quality and of similar advantages. Secondly, very big holdings already exist there on account of a big area of waste land having been recently brought under cultivation due to the construction of new canals. The area of holding per head or per family is far greater there than the area in other provinces. Thirdly, it is a place of mostly peasant proprietors. The Royal Agricultural Commission admitted in their report (139) that consolidation in the Punjab is facilitated by the comparative homogeneity of soil and by simplicity of tenure.

COST OF CONSOLIDATION

According to the Royal Agricultural Commission Report the cost of consolidation of holding has been from 1 Re. 6 as. to 2 Rs. 11 as. per acre in the Punjab. Calculating at this rate the cost of consolidation of the cultivated area comes to more than 33 crores of rupees. This calculation is based on the supposition that no complications arise due to differences in quality of land and advantages in other provinces. This huge amount of money cannot easily be found and even if the tax-payers' money be devoted for this purpose, it will hardly be commensurate with the advantages likely to be achieved thereby.

It appears therefore that the consolidation of holdings is costly and unpracticable in the circumstances that exist today and even if attempted the gain would not be helpful to any appreciable extent in mitigating the poverty of the agriculturists. The only thing possible to our mind is the system of collective farming which we propose to discuss later in all its bearings and aspects. Thus neither the want of consolidation of holdings is the cause of poverty nor its removal, even if possible, is likely to create an appreciable change in the economic condition of the farmer.

CHAPTER III

3RD ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

Is increase in population a cause of poverty?

Nobody can deny that the population in this country is increasing year after year but there is nothing new in this phenomenon because it is working exactly in the same way all over the world. Still, in the case of India, it is vehemently argued that the increase in population is the main cause of Indian poverty. It is said that a nation, which cannot support its children, has no right to produce them and that while it may be desirable in the case of other countries to produce more children, India being weak in physique and poor in economic resources, it ought to stop further increase in population. This argument cannot stand the least scrutiny. Had the percentage of the increase in population been higher in this country than in other countries, there would be some justification for advancing the argument that the increase in population is one of the main causes of Indian poverty.

POVERTY CAUSES INCREASE IN POPULATION

It is a well-known principle of economics that the birth rate is higher among poorer classes, because among them the prospects of survival are the least. If this principle is correct, increase in population is the result and not the cause of poverty. In order therefore to bring about a decrease in population we shall have to start at the other end; if poverty is first removed, increase in population will automatically stop. Even if we go about preaching the doctrine that the increase of population should be stopped, it will only be a religious or a moral preaching and cannot be expected to succeed in the near future. We have to take things as they are and cannot afford to wait till this propaganda gains sufficient strength to bear any fruit in this vast continent. Of course if India is exceptionally prolific in the production of children, we certainly owe a duty to our country to preach abstinence. But a close scrutiny of facts tells quite a different tale.

INCREASE IN POPULATION IN INDIA AND ENGLAND COMPARED

The best thing for us in this connection would be to compare the increase in population of this country with that of Great Britain. If we find that the increase in population of India is in no way alarming when compared to the increase in population in British Isles then we shall have to seek elsewhere the cause of Indian poverty. In the year 1871 the population of England and Wales was 22,712,266. It increased to 37,886,699 in 1921, that is, within a period of 50 years the increase in population amounted to 66 per cent. Comparing this with the increase in population in India we find that in 1872, the population of India was 206,162,360. It increased to 318,942,480 in 1921, an increase of 54 per cent., i.e., 12 per cent. less than that of Great Britain. The census report of 1872 was limited only to those parts of India which were then under the British administration and did not record the

population of the entire country while the report of 1921 included those portions of territory also which were annexed to British India after 1872. If such portions are excluded, the increase in population would be much lower and would hardly amount to 33 per cent. which is just half of that of England and Wales during the same period. (Modern Review 1929, page 351.)

Mr. P. N. Banerji, an eminent writer on Economics, in his well-known book "A Study of Indian Economics" on page 37 has also compared the increase of population in India with that in England. He comes to the conclusion that in England in the decade 1891 to 1901 the increase of population was 12.17 per cent., in the next decade, i.e., 1901 to 1911 the increase was 10.91 per cent. and in 1911 to 1921 the increase was 4.01. In India the increase in population from 1891 to 1901 was only 2.4 per cent. and from 1901 to 1921 it was 7 per cent. These figures clearly show that the increase in the population of India is far lower than that of England. In addition to this, if we take into consideration the fact that during these 50 years a large number of English people have left the British Isles to settle in other colonies, the increase in population will be still larger in comparison to India. Thus India cannot be said to be a great sinner in this respect. If England has not become poorer on account of this increase in its population, there seems to be no valid reason why in the case of India this increase in population should be considered a cause of its growing poverty. Further, India is a country which produces food-stuffs sufficient not only for its own needs but also for export to other countries, while England has to import articles of food from other countries for its requirements. It is, therefore, all the more incomprehensible why the question of "Empty bellies" is a special feature for India and causes no trouble to the people of England. Had increase in population been the main cause of starvation, England would have been today in a worse condition than India.

INCREASE OF MEMBERS PER FAMILY NO CAUSE OF POVERTY

The economic condition of a family does not depend upon the number of its members. A family consisting only of three men, but unemployed, has to starve while another family of a larger number of employed members, may be living a life of ease and abundance and may also be amassing money. Even in the case of families consisting only of labourers if all members are employed and get decent wages, an addition of another member to the family would not matter at all and may even be welcome. Similar is the case with nations. If similar opportunities for employment be open to Indians also as they are to Englishmen and to other nations, there is no reason why India could not support a much greater population than it is doing today. There are no reliable statistics available to show the total number of the unemployed although the educated people have been persistently clamouring for an enquiry into the deplorable conditions of unemployment prevailing in the country. People have been urging upon the Government that it should find out useful avocations and industrial openings for the unemployed, but it has so far turned a deaf ear to this important demand. The reason is that the Government does not consider

it to be its duty to afford relief in any way to the vast number of unemployed Indians. Whenever opportunities for retrenchment have occurred, it has had no compunction in axing the poor and illiterate menial staff and low paid clerical establishment or in curtailing the hours and days of labour in their workshops, causing untold misery and suffering to the already semi-starving poor. But this cannot be allowed in a free country like England. A ministry, venturing to launch such a proposal, would be turned out of office the very next day.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Dr. P. C. Ray (Sir), in his book styled "Poverty Problem in India" has given the following table, comparing the density of population in different countries:—

<i>Name of the country.</i>	<i>Density per sq. mile.</i>			
1. Belgium	540
2. England	498
3. Holland	360.9
4. China	289
5. Italy	263.6
6. Germany	236.7
7. India	229
8. France	187.8
9. Ireland	144.4
10. Scotland	132
11. Spain	80
12. Norway and Sweden	27
13. Turkish Empire	24
14. United States	17.9
15. Russia (European and Asiatic)	13

The above table clearly shows that the density of population in India is high but not so high as in some of the European countries and that there is still scope for expansion. There is Japan a small island subject to heavy losses from occasional earth-quakes with a density of population nearly about 60 per cent. more than that of India. It can provide a decent living for its nationals but India cannot even support her population. If we compare Japan with the Punjab we find that the area of Japan is 142,000 square miles and the population is 55,961,140 while the area of the Punjab is 136,925 square miles and its population is only 2,585,024. Now it is clear that although the area of Japan is almost equal to that of the Punjab, it can support more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the population of the Punjab. Nobody can doubt even for a second that an ordinary Jap is much superior economically to a Punjabi and his standard of life is much higher.

MIGRATION NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR A REMEDY

Those who argue that the increase in population is the main cause of Indian poverty assert that if the surplus population of India migrated to other countries, it would be better off there and the remaining population in this country would also prosper. This argument is fallacious.

cious and cannot stand examination. People of this country migrated to foreign countries like Africa, Mauritius, Canada and a number of other colonies. Those who have cared to study the conditions of living of these Indian emigrants in those foreign countries are perfectly aware of their miseries and sufferings and have come to this conclusion that Indian emigration should stop altogether. The movement of passive resistance started by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa is an incident in point and although an amicable settlement was arrived at, still the fact remains that Indians even now suffer there under one inequity or other. Even in colonies which are part and parcel of the British Empire, Indians are not treated on an equal footing with other members of the empire. You cannot get respectable treatment in a foreign country unless and until you have the support of your own government and the people behind you. It is not that the illiterate Indians alone, who go out as indentured labourers to other countries, are maltreated; even Indians of culture and education are subjected to various indignities and disabilities. Every day we hear of difficulties in the way of Indian students in British Universities and other countries on the continent of Europe and America and we cannot do anything to help them. The colour and race prejudice is so strong in foreign countries that our nationals are made to feel their inferiority at every stage, even during the course of their brief sojourn there. India is open to all nationals of the world but Indians are not welcome guests anywhere. An Indian is a stranger even in his own country and it is but natural if he is looked down upon in foreign countries.

CHAPTER IV

4TH ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

Is monsoon responsible for the poverty of the masses?

It is generally alleged that the prosperity of the cultivator depends upon regular rainfall. If it rains at the proper time, the cultivator gets a bumper crop, he is prosperous and happy, but on the other hand, if the monsoon fails, he has to fall back upon his own resources and has to spend whatever he has been able to save in good seasons in order to tide over the calamity that befalls him. It has been estimated that on an average good rains come only once in five years. That being so, for 4 years an agriculturist has to depend upon his own resources, but one good harvest is hardly able to take him through 4 years of bad crops. It is therefore argued that the prosperity of the cultivator in India depends upon the goodwill of the God Varun. If he is appeased, the cultivator is happy but if he is displeased, the former's calamity knows no bounds. The scientific world has not so far been able to find out the ways and means to bring about conditions by which regularity in rainfall can be guaranteed and consequently it is not wrong to say that the prosperity of the cultivator of India is beyond human control.

In the Provincial Council and the Legislative Assembly too, the finance members invariably remark that the budget of India is the budget of the monsoon. If it rains at the proper time, realisations are made to the extent anticipated and if it fails, the budget is a deficit budget. Railways, posts and telegraphs, commerce, imports and exports and nearly all other departments depend for their revenues upon the cultivator who in his turn depends upon rains. The additional taxation in the shape of increase in salt-duty, etc., which the Government often imposes to adjust its budget adds further to increase the misery of the poor peasant upon whom it falls.

ARTIFICIAL IRRIGATION

Superficially, it may appear to be true that the prosperity of the cultivator is bound up with the monsoon but a close study at once exposes the fallacy underlying this argument. Agriculture is only an art by which a man equips himself with the necessary knowledge and material to get the largest amount of yield from the soil. If wheat seed somehow gets into the soil and there is sufficient moisture therein, it generally germinates. After germination if it gets favourable conditions, some of the plants may ripen into wheat while others may die a natural death. A farmer does not depend upon this sort of natural growth under natural circumstances but he ploughs and prepares a seed bed which is favourable for the growth of the crop. He fertilizes the land with manure, gives the necessary cultivation to the crop and irrigates his fields at the proper time. Thus through the knowledge and equipment at his disposal he tries to produce more than nature could produce by throwing the seeds haphazard in the jungle. The art of farming is

nothing else but to find out favourable laws of nature by which a crop may grow to the largest extent possible and then to turn these principles into practice. At every step, the farmer tries to make changes in the order of nature and adopts means most favourable to the growth of his crop. When weeds grow, he tries to remove them; if there is a tree overshadowing the plants which cannot thrive without sunshine he immediately removes it; if there is not sufficient food and moisture in the soil, he supplies them by artificial means. Land packed up in a solid block by nature is ploughed up, pulverised and cultivated so as to allow the roots of the plants to penetrate the soil freely. Thus an agriculturist has to contend against his natural environments at every step. If mere broad-casting of seeds would have given a bumper-crop anybody would have become a farmer but a cultivator in order to become successful has to acquire sufficient knowledge about the growth of plants and then has to adopt ways and means to turn that knowledge to his advantage. Man has investigated the natural principles of plant growth and scientific investigation has equipped him with resources to get the best return for his labour. A scientific agriculturist has gone even to the length of controlling the climatic effects and the geological defects in the soil. In cold climates he provides artificial heat for the plants and similarly to avoid the effect of heat in a tropical country he successfully provides artificial cold for the growth of plants which generally thrive in cold climates. Natural forces are out of his control everywhere and he has to contend against them in India just as he has to do in other countries. These forces of nature work against the poor agriculturist in one shape or the other. In some countries the fall of snow for months continuously does not allow plants to grow, in others, strong winds damage the crop, or the hot sun burns the vegetation. To our mind want of rain at the proper time is one of those minor difficulties that can be easily overcome. Everybody in India knows the art of artificial irrigation and it has been well known from times immemorial. Similarly people of other countries also overcome local difficulties. Those who contend that the poverty of the cultivator depends upon the monsoon, are totally ignorant of the art of cultivation. It is not by appeasing Varun, the God of rain, that regular rains can be had but it depends solely on the exertions of the cultivator himself to provide sufficient moisture for his crop. Africa is a much hotter country than India. In the vast deserts of South Africa, the scientific investigator has found means of sinking wells whereby water is brought above the soil level and without the use of any motive power artificial irrigation is brought about. The same could be done in this country. We know that recently wells have been constructed in Madras which give an incessant flow of water to the extent of 400 gallons per minute at the height of 20 feet from the ground level. Who knows on further investigation, it may be possible to have such wells everywhere in the country and thus the question of artificial irrigation may be easily solved. To quote another instance; only a hundred years back a vast portion of the Punjab was a waste desert but by Government effort, a net-work of irrigation canals has been spread over it which now irrigates vast tracts of land with the result that the yield of this newly broken soil is today the highest in the country. Thus it is clear that the monsoon cannot be said to be wholly responsible for the failure of crops, it is

rather the apathy of the people and the Government towards providing artificial means of irrigation that is to a great extent responsible for the sad state of affairs.

India is a country of rivers which can be easily turned into canals providing irrigation for vast tracts of land now lying dry. Not only is water available in natural streams but an unbroken supply of water lies under-ground, which can be utilised by means of tube-wells wherever it is possible. The average rainfall in India is 37 inches which is much more than what is required for the ripening of crops. Nature provides this abundant supply of plant food every year but through our ignorance and want of resources we do not avail ourselves of it and complain that failure of the monsoon is responsible for our poverty. The Irrigation Commission Report calculated that out of the total rainfall in this country more than 35 per cent. of rain water goes back to the sea. If this water could somehow be utilised for irrigation purposes it would provide more than sufficient moisture by means of tube-wells. We have, therefore, no reason to complain of the failure of the monsoon. But unfortunately for us, upto now only 16 per cent. of the total area cultivated has been artificially irrigated, and the rest 84 per cent. has been left dry. Not only that, but in certain provinces tanks which formerly were in existence for artificial irrigation, have been allowed to go out of use and millions of wells have become dilapidated as it was not possible for the cultivator on account of his poverty to keep them in repairs.

In these modern days of science millions of units of energy have been created to help the agriculturist to get water at cheap rates. Unfortunately in India this large amount of energy is not utilised to help the poor farmer and if an attempt in this line has been made anywhere the interests of the farmer have been sacrificed to those of the urban consumers.

It is sometimes contended that low rainfall is due to the fact that during recent years big forests have been cut down and the amount of evaporated water has been considerably lessened, and the humid climate which is so essential for rains, has been destroyed with the result that we do not get sufficient rains as we used to do formerly. We cannot vouchsafe for the accuracy of this statement but if it is so, the responsibility lies on those who for want of employment have turned forests into fields or on the Government who has sold valuable timber for the sake of revenue.

It is not our business to go into the causes of low rainfall but we have tried to show that the poverty of the Indian peasant is not due so much to the failure of the monsoon as it is to the want of resources to safeguard against such failure.

CHAPTER V

5TH ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

Extravagance of the Cultivator

Most of the writers on Indian Rural Economics have attributed poverty of the agriculturist to his own extravagance. They argue that at the time of marriage and on other ceremonial occasions he incurs heavy expenditure for which he has to borrow large sums of money which he is unable to pay. Debts go on accumulating till he becomes altogether insolvent.

CHARGE OF EXTRAVAGANCE NOT PROVED

Along with extravagance, imprudence is also considered to be an additional cause of his indebtedness. The Indian agriculturist is accused of being imprudent by habit in a number of ways which are different according to different writers. Unfortunately there are very few writers on Indian Economics who care to mix with the agriculturists to study their mentality and to realise their feelings. Without this study at close quarters it is very difficult to form a correct opinion about the imprudence of the village folk. Hence it is that those who sit in judgment upon the agriculturists more often than not arrive at erroneous conclusions. To take an instance, purchase of land at exorbitant prices is generally deemed imprudent, but it may be perfectly justifiable in most circumstances. It is really unfortunate that all sorts of allegations are made without studying the real conditions under which an agriculturist is forced to work. A human being is an organism and not a machine. Social habits, mental out-look, religious practices and a host of other things are important factors in shaping his conduct and they so act upon him that he is sometimes apt to do absurd things quite unconsciously. The Indian agriculturist is as much a creature of circumstances as any other human being.

Even highly educated people have been known to have become easy victims of their environments. They have been seen spending money like water for obtaining insignificant titles, distinctions or even honorary offices. Many of them spend lavishly on elections to Municipal or other local boards and legislatures. Instances after instances can be quoted of such extravagance still nobody has cared to make a general statement like the one that is made about the agriculturist. Every-body feels himself competent to sit in judgment upon the poor and illiterate peasant and his actions.

The life of an agriculturist is one of continuous monotony and drudgery. From early morn till late in the night he passes his days in the same rut repeating and conducting the same processes throughout his life. At times he has to pass even his nights on his farm and goes to sleep pondering over one and the same aspect of farming. He is cut off from the activities of big towns and cities and if he gets any

news of the world, it is only when some old piece of newspaper reaches the village through some one who happens to go there on business. He does not know anything about cinemas, theatres or other resorts of public enjoyment. It is only occasionally that he hears discourses and sermons of the learned. His whole life is one of simple monotony that knows no change. It is hardy and full of toil. If therefore by good fortune, a marriage intervenes or some other ceremonial occasion arrives, it is only natural if in his jubilation and hilarity he becomes a bit imprudent or extravagant. Occasions which come only once in a life-time, naturally become events of importance in the family and are made use of for feasting parties at which friends and relations of the family assemble from far and near. It is but natural if the village folk spend a lot on such occasions. We admit that none should go beyond his means and a sense of proportion in incurring expenditure is necessary, yet if one goes a bit beyond limits on such occasions one does not deserve to be blamed. It is a bit cruel on the part of those who do not take interest in affairs of the agriculturist to judge his conduct so strictly. Do the literate persons and the so-called educated classes set a better example to him on similar occasions in their own homes? Have they helped him in any way to better his lot or to remove his illiteracy? Have they ever taken the trouble of going to his place and taking interest in his affairs? If they have not done so, it is futile for them to make wild assertions against him.

The social customs which lead to extravagance today are the remnants of those prosperous days when the cultivator had everything in abundance. He had large quantities of food-grains in store and had ample supply of milk and milk products. In those days of prosperity it was a pleasure to invite friends to participate in festivities at marriages and other ceremonial occasions. Such enjoyments did not cost him much as articles of food were abundant. Just as educated Indians in cities give parties or 'At homes' to officials and friends, in the same way village people used to assemble together for enjoyment at times in order to break the monotony of their hard life. Who could then ever imagine that a country with inexhaustible resources and abounding in natural gifts, where the fertile fields yielded the best products, where bullocks were strong and healthy and where milch cattle were in abundance, would some day be reduced to its present miserable condition when the sons of the soil have to go half fed and half clothed!!!

Old habits are not easy to shake off and we shall not be hard on the agriculturist if he falls a prey to them. He must however get rid of them and must adapt himself to the changed conditions of life very soon even if in so doing his longevity which is already reduced to less than half of what it is in other parts of the world, is affected injuriously. Recreation and diversion are as much necessary for existence as work itself. If you take away from the agriculturist his present enjoyment other sorts of enjoyment and recreation will have to be provided and for aught we know the substituted enjoyments might prove even more costly of which the poor peasant would not be able to avail himself.

PURCHASE OF LAND AT FANCY PRICES

As an instance of his imprudence, it is sometimes urged that the Indian peasant purchases land at exorbitant prices and entangles himself in debts which he cannot easily discharge. It might be so in some cases but it is not necessarily a main cause of his poverty or indebtedness. Those who argue that this imprudence is the cause of his poverty forget the circumstances which sometimes force him to follow this course. The law of the land is very defective and even cruel in this respect. In the United Provinces the law of preemption prevents a cultivator from purchasing even his own holding unless he happens to be a co-sharer in the village. The co-sharers in the village consider it derogatory to themselves if an ordinary cultivator purchases land in the village and acquires the status of a zemindar. A cultivator has to pay therefore prohibitive prices sometimes only in order to acquire this status and to avoid the law of preemption. In other countries this is not the case and peasant proprietorship is the ideal to secure which all attempts of the law and society are directed. Governments have made large amounts of money available to the cultivator to enable him to purchase land from the land-holders and this money is recoverable at a very low rate of interest (generally 3 per cent.) in easy instalments spread over 60 years. Legislatures have made it a rule that a cultivator is entitled to file an application for the purchase of land against the proprietor and acquire it through the court. Every facility as regards loans, free advice about the situation, quality, etc., of the land is given by his Government. But in India it is a different tale altogether. If a cultivator manages somehow to purchase land, all sorts of hindrance are placed in his way. Land is the main source of his livelihood and it is but natural that he should desire to acquire it. When a chance for purchasing it offers itself he cannot let it slip and puts in every effort to possess it. Sometimes in this attempt he has to incur debt and we should not blame him if he does so. Society and law both force this upon him.

LAND THE ONLY INVESTMENT OPEN TO A CULTIVATOR

It is not the only reason that the cultivator has to pay a high price for land. There is another reason and a very important one also. Cultivators have their prosperous days only once in many years when they can have some savings. Unfortunately there are no other openings for profitable investment than purchase of land. And we should not come down upon the agriculturist who has been able to save something if he tries to invest his savings in land and is ready to pay a price which to other persons, situated differently from him, might appear exorbitant or fabulous. It is true that during the present depression land has immensely fallen in value, but this is only a passing phase. One cannot draw any conclusion from abnormal circumstances. It is a fact that land has always remained a safe investment and therefore its price has gone on increasing every year, and whoever tries to purchase it must be ready to pay the enhanced price even though the transaction might sometimes amount to a sort of speculation in the eye of those who have not studied the question at close quarters. Moreover, the purchase of land by an agriculturist

is not only an investment but a necessity. If by force of circumstances he becomes a bit imprudent sometimes it is to some extent excusable. The expectation of a good crop and high prices offer him an irresistible temptation and he is easily led away to pay a high price. We may call him imprudent if we like but in the circumstances in which he lives every human being is bound to be so. In every society we find extravagant and imprudent people. Even educated people who are expected to know better, are not free from the defect. It is no wonder, therefore, if extravagance is found among a small portion of the peasantry also. The conditions under which the Indian agriculturist has to live are very hard and it is only because he has become used to them that he is able to survive. Another man with the best of training and education would find it impossible for himself to succeed under those adverse circumstances. We are sure that with all the knowledge, experience, education and study of economics at his back, no other man will survive even for three years in the circumstances under which an Indian cultivator has to pass his whole lifetime. This is undoubtedly a very bold assertion but we are convinced of its truth on the basis of hard facts. We know quite a large number of friends with agricultural training, owning large capital and big areas of land who could not carry on agricultural operations successfully even for a few years and had to enter service or take to some other profession. There is also a good number of officials who have passed their entire life in the agricultural department but in spite of their wish they could not make up their mind to start farming after their retirement from service on account of the adverse conditions and had to prefer service in some Indian State or to take up some other profession. Probably some stray European officials might have taken up the profession of a planter of tea, coffee, rubber or sugar cane with the patronage of the Government after securing vast tracts of land for a song. But it is a sad and a different tale altogether in the case of an Indian. It is better not to enter into this discussion at this stage. It may be asked, and pertinently too, why the educated people in an agricultural country like India do not take to farming, why Indian graduates prefer law and other professions to agriculture? The answer is obvious, simply because it does not pay and the capital and the labour are lost,

PICTURE OVERDRAWN

We are convinced that the agriculturists are not only patient and hard-working but very economical in their methods of living. The charge of extravagance levelled against them is mostly unfounded. There are a few of them who are both extravagant and imprudent but their percentage is insignificant, ordinarily the Indian peasant is frugal and economical in his daily life, and it is only due to his economical habits of living that he has been able to drag on his miserable existence uptil now. As far back as 1875 the Deccan Ryots Commission enquired into the causes of rural indebtedness. The result of the Commission's enquiries showed that "Undue prominence has been given to the expenditure on marriage and other festivities as a cause of the ryot's indebtedness." Recently in

1931 the Provincial banking Enquiry Committees appointed by the different provincial governments went into the causes of indebtedness of the agriculturist. The majority of them came to the conclusion that the picture of his extravagance and imprudence was overdrawn and some of them made definite statements against this allegation. The Bengal Provincial Enquiry Committee in their report on page 97 expressed the opinion, "That social and religious ceremonies make but small contribution to the total indebtedness." Similarly the Central Banking Committee in their report on page 741 did not support the popular theory that "Extravagant expenditure on ceremonies is the main cause of indebtedness." If we analyse the local surveys made by the different Provincial Committees on the spot, we shall be convinced that the picture of the agriculturist is simply imaginary and the charge cannot be substantiated. We wish that the educated people who generally persist in making such statements considered the matter a little dispassionately and also showed the agriculturists the methods of more economical living.

CHAPTER VI.

6TH ALLEGED CAUSE OF POVERTY

Is the money-lender responsible for the poverty of the peasant?

Generally it is alleged that the rate of interest in this country is very high and whatever the poor agriculturist earns, is taken away by the money-lender in lieu of interest. The indebtedness of the peasant therefore is said to be the main cause of his poverty. No business can thrive which has to work with borrowed capital paying interest at exorbitant rates. The peasant proprietors are thus losing their property and land is passing into the hands of the money-lender.

HIGH RATE OF INTEREST NOT THE CAUSE OF POVERTY

We admit that the tenantry is highly indebted and the rate of interest is very high but from this alone it does not necessarily follow that their poverty is due to their indebtedness. If we compare the bank-rate of this country with that of other parts of the world, we find that there has never been a time during the present regime, when the bank-rate in India compared favourably with that of other countries. The prevalent bank-rate here has been 6 per cent. while in other countries it has been 3 per cent. Even during the most prosperous days of the Great War the bank-rate was near 5 per cent. In Germany just after the war the bank-rate reached the high figure of 30 per cent. but after an interval of a few years it was brought down to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In Britain when the country decided to suspend the gold standard last September, the bank-rate was 6 per cent. But the financiers and the Government managed matters in such a way that in the month of June, i.e., within a period of less than 9 months, the bank-rate was reduced to 2 per cent. the lowest level within the last 35 years. Great Britain has not become richer during a short period of 9 months but people who are responsible for Government clearly see that it is only when money becomes easy and bank-rate low, that the industries are likely to prosper. Unfortunately this fact is not realized in India and the bank-rate always remains at a very high figure. The currency and exchange is so manipulated that it is detrimental to Indian interests and the bank-rate is never allowed to go down. When the bank-rate in India seldom goes below 6 per cent. it is not likely that a poor man will get cheap money at cheap rates of interest. A poor man with no security to give, has always to pay a higher rate of interest. A high rate is always an effect and not the cause of poverty.

'THE MUCH MALIGNED MONEY-LENDER A NECESSARY EVIL'

In the case of money-lending it is not the principle of demand and supply alone that determines the rate of interest. There is a further principle working which is known as the risk of business. Even today a cultivator with sufficient means can secure a loan in the

ordinary market at the rate of 9 per cent. while in the United Provinces the rate of interest charged by cooperative societies from their members is generally 15 per cent. The cooperative societies have the full support of the Government behind them and have been provided with special privileges and facilities which it is not possible for any money-lender to have. But all this support of the Government has not been able to secure a lower rate of interest for ordinary people. The first consideration before a money-lender while advancing a loan is the risk that he would incur in the transaction. Nobody can expect a money-lender to advance money to a tenant who has purchased his bullocks on loan from a cattle dealer, who has taken his land on exorbitant rents to be paid after the crop is harvested, who has no house to mortgage and the only security available is his plain and simple word of mouth. An English author describes his assets as follows:—"An acre or two of impoverished land, a pair of lean cattle, an eight annas plough, a dry cow, a two Rupee goat." Naturally in such cases the rate of interest charged would be very high and it is why. Afghans who generally deal with such people charge interest at the rate of -[2]- per rupee per month. The rent and the canal dues form the first charge on the crop produced by the agriculturist and so a money-lender cannot realize his amount if the crop is just sufficient to cover these charges. Under the present system, even the house does not belong to the cultivator and the zemindar is considered to be the owner of it. The tenant can neither mortgage it, nor sell it, nor can he let it out on lease; it cannot therefore form a security for any loan advanced. In most of the provinces the tenant has no right even over his holding. He can neither mortgage nor sell it. Thus the future crop is the only tangible security upon which a money-lender can rely, and how uncertain such a security can be, is quite obvious to every body. It is subject to freaks of nature; it may suffer from draught or it may be spoiled by excessive rain. A pest may destroy it or some other calamity may befall it. Even the most cautious and intelligent agriculturist cannot make a correct estimate of his future crop. Under such circumstances, how can a shrewd money-lender consider his money safe in these days. Besides, in this age of materialism what do spiritual or moral considerations matter in comparison to profits or losses measured in terms of money? It is therefore clear that the high rate of interest is due to the poverty of the peasant and not *vice versa* and indebtedness is only the effect and not the cause of the poverty of the agriculturist.

There are other causes too which inflate the rate of interest. The first and the foremost among them is the immediate need for borrowing money. Take for instance the need for a bullock arising at a time when ploughing is on and the delay of a few days may result in the total ruin of crops. When the monsoon breaks, every cultivator wants to plough his land as early as possible. At that time he cannot get bullocks on hire nor can he ask his neighbour to help him. If he goes to a money-lender he naturally takes advantage of his need and demands a high rate of interest. At such a critical juncture a cultivator is unable to bargain on favourable terms. He has no time to calculate the rate of interest but his attention is fixed on the most emergent need. The

least delay means no crop for the whole year. The same is the case when he requires seed to sow. His poverty does not allow him to store sufficient seed for his requirements and he has often to borrow it at a very high rate of interest. The payment of rent is another necessity. If the rent is not paid at the proper time it may mean ejection from his holding which he or his ancestors had acquired after continuous labour of years or generations together. The other cause of the high rate of interest is the uncertain yield from his fields. Nobody, however cautious he may be, can fore-tell the amount of money that he is likely to get from a certain crop. It is difficult to estimate the produce or the price of a standing-crop which is just to be harvested; what to say of the crop which has yet to be grown. The whole cycle of a farmer's profession has become a sort of speculation. The cultivator gets his income only once or twice in the year, and that period too lasts only for a few days during the harvesting season. For the remaining days of the year he has to spend money either from the income he got or from the loan advanced by the money-lender. We know that most of the Government servants drawing fixed salaries generally spend their entire salary before the end of a month. This means that a literate Indian drawing a small but fixed salary in a month is unable to arrange his expenditure in such a way that his demands are regularly met till the time of his next income. A cultivator who has on an average the lowest income per head and who gets his income in a lump sum once or twice in the year, cannot be expected to spend it regularly in such a way that all his wants are well anticipated and provided for. Add to this his illiteracy and incapability to frame his budget. Money in hand always tempts a man to spend it. It is only the economic habit of the farmer which has kept him so long to keep his head above water. All these factors taken together are beyond his control and force him to run into debt. It is a necessary evil and though it adds a bit to his poverty it cannot in any way be deemed to be its cause.

It is not only in India that a very high rate of interest is charged but all over the world a man with no security has to pay a very high rate of interest. Cases are on record where in a rich country like America 53 per cent. per annum is not an unheard of rate of interest. Only a few years back 40 per cent. per annum was the legal rate of interest allowed in England itself, where bank-rate seldom exceeded 3 per cent. the courts decreed claims for interest at the rate of 40 per cent. per annum. A poor man has everywhere to pay the penalty of being poor. Wherever he may be, the treatment meted out to him is just the same, and in this age of materialism everybody wants to exploit him for his own gain.

Those who talk against the money-lender and try to prove him the villain of the piece forget that in countries like England huge sums are lent out by Government without interest or at a very low rate of interest. Recently England has allotted the huge sum of 15 lacs of pounds equal to one crore 90 lacs of rupees to be given without interest repayable in sixty years for helping the agriculturists by Agricultural Credits Act, 1928. In India on the other hand when people are dying of starvation on account of famine money is advanced by the Government at the rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and the whole sum is recovered within a space of 2 or 3

years. The readers very well know what a *taquavi* means to a cultivator. He gets less and has to pay promptly and both these things mean a much higher rate of interest than charged by the money-lender. In a poor country like India the rate of interest must be very high specially when the Government itself borrows at about 6 per cent.

Whatever we have written on this subject should not be taken to mean that we plead for the sins of the money-lender. We want him to be more humane and reasonable, to be less exacting and greedy; nor is it our intention that attempts should not be made to provide money at a cheaper rate to the cultivator. We strongly hold that industries yielding low profits can only stand on the support of capital at lower rates of interest. The money-lender has existed from times immemorial and he is bound to exist in future. He is a necessary evil if you please to call him so. In spite of the introduction of co-operative societies his necessity is still felt by the members of the Co-operative Societies. What we desire to emphasize is that the poverty of the peasantry is not due to the money-lender and the rate of interest charged by him but it is the direct result of their poverty that the money-lender is able to carry on his trade with such obnoxious results. Their indebtedness is not the cause but the effect of their poverty.

PART II
Investigation

OLD IDEAL

There is an old Hindi proverb,

“Uttam Kheti Madhyam Ban,

Nikhad Chakri Bheekh Nidan”.

“Of all the professions agriculture is the best; next to agriculture is trade; service is the worst and only better than begging.” In the good old days when this proverb originated, agriculture was given the place of honour in the Indian body politic but unfortunately today the peasant class is given a very low place in society, if not the lowest. The position of a petty trader is deemed much superior today to that of a farmer and even an ordinary grocer in the village holds a high social status than the cultivator upon whom he depends for his living. If we compare the position of one of the biggest cultivators with that of an ordinary trader in cities the disparity is still more marked. In spite of the fact that more than three-fourths of the Indian trade consists of agricultural produce or of the commodities consumed by the agriculturists, the poor agriculturist does not profit in any way by this trade and his standard of living is so inferior to that of city people, that their lives are poles asunder.

CULTIVATOR'S PLACE IN SOCIETY

Today we find that the craze for service amongst the educated classes is at its highest. Every literate person is in search of employment and fortunate indeed is he who can get into Government service. The old order of society has changed and has given place to new. A clerk on Rs. 15 a month is considered to be superior to a wage-earner who gets one rupee a day or even more. Most of the income to the Government is derived from the agriculturist either in the shape of direct taxation on land or in the form of direct duties. He contributes the largest amount to the Indian exchequer in the form of land tax, general and court-fee, stamps, railway, posts and telegraphs and a number of other ways. Yet he who provides the sinews of war for the upkeep of the Government leads a life of poverty and starvation. A police constable or a court peon getting Rs. 10 a month commands a higher position in society and enjoys life better than he who feeds them, what to say of high officials drawing fat salaries from his own money.

In India, a land reputed for indiscriminate charity, the profession of begging is more lucrative, than that of the agriculturist. A beggar has neither to fear the freaks of nature nor his income is liable to any taxes to the Government or to the community to which he belongs.

DEPLORABLE CHANGE

It really passes one's imagination as to how such a complete change in the status of the agriculturist has been brought about within the

course of a century only. It cannot be denied that the profession of an agriculturist is one of the noblest and the best. An agriculturist is the hardest worked individual in the body politic and he is the man who produces wealth in the real sense of the term. It is a sad irony of fate that those who are not the producers, i.e., those who live by means of trade or professions and are consumers only and even those who live on charity, have a better chance of enjoying life than those who produce food and other necessities of life. The society in which the honest and the hard-working agriculturist does not get enough to eat or to clothe himself and has to be content with the lowest status, stands self-condemned, and the system of Government under which such social conditions can exist also cannot escape condemnation. In the words of John Matthai, the author of "The Village Government in British India" "the first and most important business of a Government is, after all, to contrive that its people live and not die. In the long run, in the judgment of the history, it is by this test that Governments will be judged. How does India stand this test? In the most civilized parts of Europe, during the past three-quarters of a century, mainly by a development of Local Government using only that scientific knowledge which is equally available to all administrations we have doubled the average expectation of life of the whole population. Seeing that in India, where the circumstances are more adverse, the average expectation of life of the people is only somewhere about one half of the people of England". (Page XIII.) "There is perhaps no direction in which the community could more profitably invest its thought, its effort, and its power, than in a wise development of its Local Government". The author exclaims "What a loss, what a tragedy it is that many of India's most valuable citizens die before they are fifty".

This process of transformation is a fruitful study. In order to find out the causes which are responsible for this change, we must look into the conditions of life prevailing in the old days specially in our villages. We intend to draw a faithful picture of these conditions in order to show in clear contrast the conditions under which the cultivator is living today and those under which he lived in old days. By a comparison of these conditions we shall be able to understand the situation and to diagnose the real causes. After completing this investigation we propose to suggest remedies for the improvement of the agriculturist's lot. It would necessitate going into the details of the village life of the olden times. Much of what is said in the following pages regarding the old village life is based on the writings of well-known English authors who have tried to investigate this problem in their own way. Nobody can accuse these authors of any prejudice in their outlook in favour of the old Indian villages. From a perusal of the books consulted the readers would know at a glance that some of these books were written long ago. We have tried to avoid long quotations for the sake of brevity, and have disregarded oriental authorities altogether for fear of our being dubbed a mere propagandist against the present state of affairs. Our reluctance, therefore, to quote the Sanskrit and Persian authorities on the subject does not mean that we do not consider them as reliable as the writings

CHAPTER I

OLD VILLAGE.

General Description

SELF-SUFFICING CHARACTER OF AN OLD VILLAGE

The main difference in the old Indian village and the present one is that in the olden times the village was a unit complete in itself while today it is a part and parcel of a bigger unit. It does not mean that in the olden times a village was isolated from other villages, towns and cities. What we mean is that India enjoyed more corporate and democratic life than it enjoys today. The village was in every way a separate entity in itself and did not depend for its every day requirements on the outside world. It produced its own food and whatever remained after meeting the needs of the village, was stored in granaries as a safeguard against famine or other calamities. Only such portion of food-grains was sent out as was necessary to meet the Government demands of taxes or other contributions. Most of this also was stored in the village itself to be divided in accordance with the instructions of the Government amongst their staff and employees. Besides articles of food, cotton was also produced in every village. It was picked up by the cultivator and his family ginned it into lint at home, turned the lint into yarn on the ordinary spinning wheel—an instrument which has survived up to this day—the day of machinery and factories. The home-spun yarn was then woven into cloth by the village weaver. The cloth thus prepared was turned into simple garments by the village tailor or by the ladies at home. If a coloured cloth was needed there were dyers in the villages to dye the yarn or the cloth as was necessary. It is true that ordinarily the cloth available to an ordinary cultivator was not so fine in quality or fascinating in colour or design as is available today in the market but it was available in sufficient quantity to the people to meet their simple needs. In some villages weavers and spinners of special repute were available and they used to produce very fine cloth for the richer people. It was that primitive period of human history when people in European countries were generally known to live like animals and cover their bodies with leaves instead of cloth. Cotton as a plant and its method of cultivation were then unknown in other parts of the world and even a name for that commodity had not been invented. At first, it was styled as cotton wool or wool cotton and it was after a very long time that these people learnt the art of spinning and weaving. The foreigner who is now dumping the Indian market with cloth of his manufacture, used to import different varieties of Indian made cloth and pay fabulous prices for it. This went on for centuries and even in the days when labour saving appliances and steam driven machinery had come into vogue, the stuff produced was neither better nor cheaper than the cloth of Indian market and consequently the import of Indian cloth was as brisk as before the advent of those appliances.

The Government of England of those days felt that free trade with India in cloth was draining the wealth of the land. They, therefore, when the trade could not be checked by natural means did so by prohibitory import duties and high tariff walls. Those who now look askance at the movement of Swadeshi and at that of boycott of foreign goods have no justification for doing so. But perhaps what is sauce for the gander is not sauce for the goose.

DIVISION OF LANDS

Every village then had its boundary marks and the entire land belonged to the village community. There was no right of private ownership in land and the elders used to distribute it amongst their members in accordance with the needs and requirements of the families inhabiting the village. The zemindari system was unknown and no cultivatory rights were recognized. Land formed the common property of the village and was subject to allotments and re-allotments amongst the families by the village community periodically or otherwise according to the exigencies of the time. Very big areas were left for pasture, and milch cattle of good breed were available. Milk and milk products were also found in sufficient quantities for the nourishment of children, grown-ups, the infirm and the old. No vegetable ghec or condensed milk or other similar stuffs were available to be imported from abroad, nor milch cattle were allowed to be exported to cities to be treated with cruelty and finally slaughtered after one lactation period. No doubt the transport of cattle was not so easy and it stood in the way of export but there was also a strong sentiment against it and no villager could dare defy public opinion in the matter. The village community could not tolerate a man who was responsible in any way for bringing about the extinction of good breed. Granaries were always full, nature was so abundant in its gifts that land was seldom cultivated more than once in three years. It is true that in times of famine, grain could not easily be transported from distant places but famine conditions as they exist today were not known in those days and there was a sufficient store of food-grains in every village to ward off the calamity for years if need be. A fixed portion of the produce was given to the ruler. The land given as grants to temples, educational institutions and to other servants of the village was exempt from tax, nor were pastures and common lands of the village taxed, as they produced nothing in the shape of regular crops.

REQUIREMENTS OF VILLAGE

The other requirements of a village were also very simple and they could be easily met with by local products. The potter would take clay from the village tank and prepare utensils on his simple wheel, bake them in fuel which was plentiful and supply the villagers with the earthen pots for nothing, for he too, being a member of the village community got his wages at the time of harvest in the shape of grant sufficient to support him and his family. The chamar would skin the dead bodies of the cattle, turn the skin into leather and make shoes and other articles for the people. The washerman served the village with his ordinary simple art of washing. The oilman would press the oil-seeds into oil and supply this necessary commodity for

lighting and other purposes and oil cakes were consumed by the cattle. The carpenter and the smith would mend or manufacture the implements of husbandry. In this way every village was a self-sufficing unit. The different artisans inhabiting the village did not get any fixed wages but were paid in kind by the cultivator in proportion to the amount produced and their own needs. In some of the villages artisans were deemed to be the common property of the village and were paid from the common fund collected for the purpose.

It is true that in those days fancy and fashionable goods were not in vogue nor were they ordinarily manufactured. As far as the local requirements were concerned they were easily satisfied. It was only the well-to-do people who used silk tusser and woollen goods which were manufactured by skilful artisans at certain well-known centres.

Articles like iron, metal goods, salt, spices and the like which were not generally produced in every village, used to be brought from different places on market days where a system of barter was in vogue. Every article necessary for the requirement of the ordinary village folk was thus easily supplied in the village itself or on market days in some adjoining village. The result was that there was more fellow-feeling amongst the people and whenever a necessity arose, the whole village stood up as one mass against a common calamity or the intruder. The entire village was happy and contented in its isolation and none knew what starvation meant.

CHAPTER II

Administration of Village

VILLAGE ORGANISATION

The first thing that surprises a foreigner in the study of village organization in olden days is the fact that in those days when the human mind was not so developed as now, simple village folk in India could organize their village in such a way that all disputes and quarrels, whatever their character, civil, revenue, criminal, social or religious were settled by the people themselves. They did not find it necessary to seek the help of lawyers or of the costly judicial machinery available today. The simplicity and the perfection of that organization which could decide intricate questions without any hard and fast rules of procedure and levy of any court-fees or stamps are really wonderful. The underlying principle which governed the administration in these village communities and which was the main cause of its success, was the happy ideal that *people cared more for their obligations than for their rights*. It has been rightly observed in "Village Government in British India" on page XII, "The Indian village, like the early English manor, emphasizes obligations rather than rights; and far from confining itself to rights on which some particular person could take action for his own benefit, devotes itself largely to the enforcement of obligations to the public." Had this high ideal been kept by Indians before them, half of our present troubles would have been avoided and the sad spectacle of the wanton sacrifice of public good to private and individual gain would not have disfigured the beautiful picture of our social life.

VILLAGE FUNCTIONARIES

In the same book on page 15 we find the following remarks about the staff of functionaries, artisans and traders of those days, "The staff of functionaries, artisans, and traders by means of which village communities carried on their internal government have survived in a recognizable form almost everywhere. A list of officers and public servants in a Madras village at the beginning of the last century is contained in a report of a select committee of the House of Commons, issued in 1812, commonly known as the fifth report.

"The headman, who has the general superintendence of the affairs of the village, settles the disputes of the inhabitants, attends to the police, and performs the duty of collecting the revenues within his village.

"The accountant, who keeps the accounts of cultivation and registers everything connected with it.

"The watchmen, of whom there are two kinds—the superior and inferior. The duty of the former is to gain information of crimes and offences and to escort and protect persons travelling from one village to another. The province of the latter is more immediately con-

fined to the village, consisting among other duties in guarding the crops and assisting in measuring them.

"The boundaryman, who preserves the limits of the village or gives evidence respecting them in cases of dispute.

"The superintendent of the tanks and water courses distributes the water therefrom for the purpose of agriculture.

"The priest, who performs the village worship.

"The schoolmaster, who is seen teaching the children in the village to read and write in the sand.

"The astrologer, who proclaims the lucky or unpropitious periods for sowing and threshing.

"The smith and carpenter, who manufacture the implements of agriculture and build the dwellings of the ryot.

The potter.

The washerman

The barber.

The cowkeeper

The doctor.

The dancing-girl.

The musician and poet.

Out of these chaukidars, mukhia and the patwari were the main functionaries. The headman was the main executive officer of the village government, the chaukidar was a servant under him and the patwari was to help him to keep the records of the village as well as to help him in other account work. There used to be a punchayat in every village under which these three officers served as public servants:

MUKHIA AND HIS APPOINTMENT

The mukhia or the headman was the post of distinction and used to be allotted by the village community to one whom all people respected. It was not a post carrying any emoluments. A headman was selected by the whole village community and whenever he lost the confidence of the people he could be displaced by another but it was not a post for which people had to adopt fair and foul means to secure the votes of the community. It was by common consent and not by a majority of votes that this high functionary was selected. An official from outside was not needed to watch the proceedings of the selection, nor two warring factions were to show their strength in men or money. The village fully knew whom to choose for this high office on account of the various good traits of his character. His impartiality was above suspicion. A magistrate's order or a recommendation of a sub-inspector of police was not necessary for this choice, nor was it essential for him to go to high officials in the headquarters and to secure their favour in order to be raised to that status. His character was the only test and this enabled him to always keep himself straight under all circumstances. His duties were very wide. Trivial matters he could decide by his own authority but in matters of importance he used to call a punchayat of elders who were expected to give

their decision after hearing the parties and others concerned. He was not to carry tales to any outside agency and his scope was limited to internal administration only.

CHAUKIDAR

The chaukidar was a paid servant of the village. He was responsible for keeping watch over any criminal who might happen to come to the village. He was held responsible for any thefts in the village area and he had himself to make good the loss so caused. He had to carry out the orders of the village headman and to call the punchayat when so ordered by him. In lieu of these services he was given some land for cultivation free of any taxes and was paid in cash from the common fund and also in kind at the time of harvest.

PATWARI

The patwari or the village accountant was responsible for keeping the village accounts in order. He used to keep records of the plots under cultivation, names of the cultivators, etc. The accounts of the common fund and of the taxes to be paid to the ruler were also kept by him. He also was allotted some land for cultivation and was given some portion of the produce at the time of harvest.

These functionaries were the servants of the village in the real sense of the term. Their appointments were made by the village community and naturally they had to faithfully serve the people who paid them. They were public servants appointed by the public and paid by the public, and they also used to discharge their duties faithfully to the public.

VILLAGE PUNCHAYAT

The village punchayat used to discharge their duties through different committees, but no details thereof are available today. However two inscriptions discovered in a village temple in Chaigalpur district (Archæological Survey of India 1904-5, Calcutta, page 130). There are six committees mentioned there; (1) annual committee, (2) garden committee, (3) tank committee, (4) gold committee, (5) committee of justice, (6) a committee styled as Panchavara. The last mentioned committee is not explained but two meanings have been suggested (a) that it was a committee for general supervision and (b) that it was entrusted with collection of special taxes. In another inscription found in another district we learn that there were five committees which were differently constituted from the above. It is possible that there were no fixed rules and the requirements of each locality determined the number of committees and their constitution. As to the election of members to those committees it was generally done at a full meeting of the great Assembly including young and old, which means that the whole of the adult population was enfranchised. The whole scheme was thus based upon a thoroughly democratic basis, which worked wonderfully well. The methods adopted may not have been so clear and definite as they are today, nevertheless there is not the least doubt that the principle of election and democracy were very well ingrained in the constitution. The mode of elections too was very interesting and a little detailed description thereof will not be deemed out of place in order to show that the present methods of Gov-

ernment and democracy were not unknown even to village people in old India. The village Government in British India on page 27 describes the mode of election as follows, "The village with its twelve streets was divided into thirty wards. Everyone who lived in these wards wrote a name on a ticket. The tickets were first arranged in separate bundles representing the thirty wards. Each bundle bore the name of the ward to which it belonged. . . The bundles were then collected and put into a pot and placed before the general body of inhabitants both "young and old" in meeting assembled. The oldest priest among those present then took the pot, and "looking upwards so as to be seen by all the people" called one of the "young boys" standing close by "who does not know what is inside" to pick out one of the bundles. The tickets in this bundle were then removed to another pot. After it had been well shuffled, the boy took one ticket out of this bundle and handed it to an officer called the arbitrator, who received it "on the palm of his hand with the five fingers open". He read out the name, and it was then shouted out by the priests present in the assembly. Thirty names were selected representing each of the wards. Out of these thirty, twelve were appointed to the annual committee (1), twelve to the garden committee (2), and six to the tank committee. For the other two committees gold and panchawara, (4)' and (6)—(the committee of justice (5) was probably not a separate committee—the whole process was gone through again from the beginning. Of the thirty names thus chosen, eighteen were eliminated. The rest 12 were divided equally between the two committees. The process by which out of the thirty names this elimination and further selection took place, here as well as in the first three committees, or at least two of them, is denoted in the inscription by the Tamil phrase Karaa-katti. For the present it may be explained, according to the tentative meaning put on it by the late superintendent of epigraphy, as an "Oral expression of opinion".

QUALIFICATIONS OF PUNCHES

Any and every member of the community could not be selected to serve on these committees but only qualified persons were eligible. The membership of these committees was open to men and women alike (Madras Epigraphy Council Report of 1909-10 on page 98). The qualifications will clearly show that all the necessary precautions were taken to select only the best men for these committees. In order to convince the readers of the perfect arrangement for selection we quote below the qualifications for membership to such committees.

1. The person must own more than a village quarter of tax-paying land.
2. He must live in a house built on his own site.
3. He must be below 70 and above 35 years of age.
4. He must have knowledge of the Mantras and the Brahmanas. Knowledge of certain specially important sacred writings will make up for a defect in property qualifications.
5. He must be conversant with business.
6. He must be virtuous and his earnings must be honest.

7. He must not have been on any of the committees for three previous years.
8. One who has been a member before, but failed to render proper accounts, and all his relations, must be excluded.
9. Those who have been guilty of certain grave sins were also ineligible.

DECISIONS OF PUNCHAYAT

It is not the place to enter into the details of the workings of these committees but it seems to be pretty sure that these committees were appointed to deal with all the activities connected with the public life of the village and they were to look after all the necessary arrangements of the small republic. All the decisions on different matters were either decided through different committees or by a punchayat called for the purpose. In case involving points of special difficulty qualified elders of the village could be called together for advice by the headman and decision was pronounced in accordance with that advice. The method of decision was not the same as it is today, i.e., by a majority. But what happened "when a decision was necessary was that in the course of the discussion the opinions of the more influential and wise gradually, and perhaps unconsciously, over bore the rest. The result was an unanimous decision....the product of two things, the assertion of the stronger and the acquiescence of the weaker. A unanimous decision rather than a majority one was the thing aimed at, and often secured." Sir Herbert Risley once expressed this point with great clearness as follows: "The method by which the punchayat is elected cannot be expressed in terms of European political phraseology. The people get together and they talk, and eventually an opinion emerges from their talk which is the opinion of all of them. There is no majority, for they are unanimous; there is no minority, for the minority has been talked over and cast in its lot with the majority. The process can only be described as selection by acclamation, in the way the earliest Greek and German popular bodies were selected, the oldest mode of election in the world." (Speech of Bengal Legislative Council, July 23, 1892.) There were no jails nor a big staff to carry out the orders or the decrees of the punchayat was necessary. The highest punishment awarded was generally a universal disapprobation of the entire village community. The culprit who would not obey the orders of the village community was styled as *grama drohin* (enemy of the village). It was considered to be the greatest punishment and a person who would thus flout the opinion of the entire village was debarred from certain religious ceremonies and was in a way out-casted. The mental pain and worries thus inflicted haunted the culprit at every step and he was considered a sinner of the worst type. This was the reason why such extreme cases did not generally arise and even the most persistent outcaste after a few days had to submit to the authority of the village. The sense of public duty and regard for public opinion was so great that indiscipline was unknown and orders of the punchayat were followed without remonstrance.

Certain authors of repute have stated that the jurisdiction of the punchayat was confined to religious or caste disputes only but it is not

an accurate statement of fact. As we have stated above the punchayat was meant for a settlement of disputes of all sorts, social, religious, political, civil or criminal. The author of the "Village Government in British India" has described in detail the cases which the old punchayats used to decide. Their method was not to finish cases somehow or other as is the case in our courts these days. Every punchayat deemed it its sacred duty to bring about an amicable settlement between the parties by a just adjustment of their respective claims, thus satisfying both the parties. This obviated the necessity of passing decrees in favour of one or the other to be brought into execution by formal processes of law.

In the beginning of the British rule the practice of referring cases for decision to punchayats was generally followed. The decision of the punchayats was final and there was no provision of any appeal therefrom. In the Report of Criminal Justice, Lower Provinces of Bengal, 1881, page 4 it is said that "as late as 1880 in the Dinajpur District of Bengal 'remnants' of the old system of village punchayat are still to be seen there and that not a few differences are adjudicated upon by this agency". Doctor Andrew Campbell, an honorary magistrate in Chota Nagpur, in giving evidence before the Decentralization Commission in 1907, said:—"I use the punchayats largely myself. . . . In cases which can be compromised I advise the parties to lay the matter before a punchayat; the punchayat meets outside my office, and they generally settle matters more satisfactorily than I could myself". In the North-West Provinces a special officer was deputed to inquire into the existence of punchayats and he reported in 1892 that "there was ample evidence to show that the custom of appealing to the leading men of villages in the case of disputes was still alive and in force, though in different degrees in different localities, being at its lowest ebb in Oudh and the eastern districts of the North-West Provinces, and being followed to a great extent in the western districts." (Quoted in North-West Provinces Legislative Council by the hon. J. Deas, Aug. 13, 1892.) The Chief Commissioner of Burma said in 1887: "The custom of referring disputes of all kinds to village elders is deeply rooted in the nature of the people, and it still prevails to a considerable extent notwithstanding the introduction of definite laws and codes." (Report, Civil Justice, Lower Burma, 1887, Orders of Chief Commissioner, Para .) In the Bombay Presidency, Elphinstone laid down in 1921: "Our principal instrument must continue to be the punchayat, and that must continue to be exempt from all new forms, interference, and regulation on our part." (Report page 99.) A civil servant from Madras, A. D. Campbell, gave the following account before the Select Committee on East Indian affairs in 1831-32: "I have had considerable experience of the use of punchayats as a revenue officer in the Bellary Division of the Ceded Districts, and found them exceedingly useful there in adjusting matters of dispute, both between the inhabitants themselves and between myself as the representative of the Government and the ryots paying land revenue as well as of the merchants; I have often found parties resisting all arguments on the part of my native servants as well as of myself, but immediately conceding the point with cheerfulness when decided in favour of the Government by a punchayat."

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE INSTITUTION

But by and by these useful institutions disappeared from the land on account of the discouragement and apathy of the servants of the John Company and later of the Crown. The truth of this assertion is evident from a statement made in the book "Village Government in British India" on page 167. It runs, "It is clear that from the beginning there was a somewhat strong feeling among the officers of the East India Company against the institution of punchayats in ordinary disputes, but their usefulness in the determination of purely social questions such as those relating to caste and of revenue matters, was recognized." This is how the punchayat came into disuse and practically disappeared in the present day.

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF PUNCHAYAT

We have said above that the punchayats were not confined to administration of justice or to decision of social disputes. They also looked after the village sanitation and were very useful in warding off the epidemics. The necessity of keeping sanitary arrangements in the villages was recognized in India from very old days and scavengers were employed to keep the streets clean and collect the rubbish at a distance from the village to be used as manure for the fields. The practice of burning human dead bodies was in vogue everywhere which has been recognized the best sanitary method to dispose of them. A cremation ground was set apart for the purpose at a distance from the village habitation or the bank of a river close by was utilized for the purpose. The dead bodies of animals were to be taken at a distance from the village by another group called chamars who turned the skins into leather for the use of the community. These practices exist even today but the corporate life of the village having been weakened and the authority of the community having been altogether undermined, village sanitation has immensely deteriorated today. The Madras District Gazetteers, Tanjore, on page 79 describes "In South India the Vattimas, a Brahman caste generally met with in the Tanjore district, are known to display a remarkable corporate unity in the sanitary arrangements which they make for the village on their own initiative." Mr. M. W. Fenton, I.C.S., giving his evidence before the Decentralization Commission also stated "Some village communities in the Punjab are in the habit of laying down rules as to where the heaps of village manure are to be deposited".

Works of public utility like the excavation of tanks for irrigation, construction of wells, keeping the village tracks in order etc. were also looked after by the village community. In the Report of Indian Irrigation 1901-3, part 1, page 8, it is said, "It is in the Madras Presidency that irrigation by small tanks and channels is most numerous, where they have been estimated to irrigate collectively an area equal to that irrigated by all the larger works which have been constructed by the British Government in that Presidency." All these tanks were excavated and maintained by village people. In village Government on page 124 it is said, "The capital required for the construction of public works in a village is usually contributed in accordance possibly with the ancient usage, by wealthy individuals to whom such works appeal as an attractive form of charitable endowment. But there has also been a considerable amount

of communal effort by the village as a whole in raising capital, and that it is even now shown in various spheres of village life is a proof that the old corporate life of the village is not a thing of the past." Sir A. T. Arundel writing about Madras in 1879, said: "During the settlement of the Tinnevely District more than Rs. 2,50,000 were raised by subscription and by the sale of waste land, and expended upon objects of public utility, chiefly irrigation works. On one channel alone the ryots built forty-six substantial masonry sluices..... In another village Rs. 1,000 was subscribed by the ryots, and expended in clearing away accumulations of silt from neglected public channels. Four villages united to subscribe Rs. 2,500 to build regulating works to apportion the water supply..... Indeed so numerous were the applications from village communities desirous of raising subscriptions for works of public utility in which they were individually interested, that the authorities were unable to pay attention to them all."

For works of public utility the village community could get compulsory labour from the village people. The author of the Village Government in British India, recognised the method adopted for the construction of public buildings and public roads, and says, "The chief public buildings usually found in a village are the meeting-house which is often no more than an open shed, a guest-house, a temple or mosque, a school where such exists, and the relics of the old town where the inhabitants used to store their property on the occasion of a sudden raid. Often these buildings are found merged in one another, and there is no clear demarcation of the uses to which they may be put in the exigencies of village life. It is difficult to trace any regular system on which they are built or repaired, but it is safe to assume that private charity and communal labour entered into construction and maintenance of these buildings as well as of village roads and communications in the same manner, though not perhaps to the same extent, as into irrigation works."

SECRET OF SUCCESS

The above description gives the readers in a nut-shell an idea of the vast activities of the punchayat and the methods adopted to achieve its purposes. It may be asked as to what was the binding force that kept this corporate body together, and why in those old days people of a village were knit together so beautifully and efficiently. We have pointed out in the very beginning that the one moral idea prevailing amongst the people of those days was to keep always in view their obligations towards the community and not their own selfish rights. A community which could adopt the golden principle of fulfilling their mutual obligations in preference to safe-guarding individual rights only, was capable of achieving such wonderful results in the history of the world. The other idea which governed the lives of these simple villagers was the belief so thoroughly engrained in their nature that it was the spirit of God the Almighty that was guiding their destinies in the hands of the Panches. Even today throughout the length and breadth of the vast continent we find that people have a far greater regard for speaking the truth and nothing but the truth when they have to appear before a village punchayat. A witness though sworn before

a court of law does not care for the truth but immediately he is put before a punchayat, he scrupulously speaks out the truth though no oath is administered to him there. There was yet one more reason that was working. The punchayat consisted of the people from the same locality who generally either knew the truth of the matter or they could easily find it out. It was an impossible job therefore for anyone to conceal the truth from them and once the truth is out it does not require a very great talent to administer justice. What is needed is only a sense of proportion in coming to a correct judgment which is more a question of experience and practice rather than that of education.

DISPUTES AMONGST VILLAGES

"Whenever a dispute arose between a number of villages, the punchayats of different villages used to sit together and decide things amicably amongst themselves. In accordance with the old constitution, a number of villages were grouped together for the purpose of facility in administration as described by the old Hindu Law Giver, Manu. Even in those days the village units were recognised and the authority of the village was held supreme, but connection was maintained between the small village republics and the Central Government. During the Mohammadan rule, the connection with the Central Government disappeared and the village communities were left more or less to their own resources, except for the due payment of the king's taxes. So long as these taxes were paid regularly, there was no inducement for a Government, almost entirely fiscal like that of the Moghuls, to interfere in matters of local administration." At the time of the advent of the British, the village community was a complete republic in itself virtually free from all outside control. It may not be out of place to mention here that even in the old Hindu period before the advent of the Mohammadan rule, villages were not interfered with in their every day administration. It was only in cases of abuse of power by the village community or when disputes arose between different villages which could not be amicably settled among themselves that complaints were lodged before the king. Ordinarily a village had its own court and its own government as described in the course of the last two chapters. In the history of British India published in 1844 the village republican system described there will give an idea as to how in the days of war and peace the village government remained unaffected by the happenings in the outside world. It says, "A village or rather township is formed by a community occupying a certain extent of land, the boundaries of which are carefully fixed, though often disputed. Sometimes it is cultivated by the united labour of the inhabitants; but more usually each ploughs his separate field, leaving always a large portion of common; assignments of land are also made to various functionaries who are charged with important public services. The principal personages is the patel or headman, who acts as judge and magistrate and treats respecting their particular affair with other communities, or with the national rulers. Other duties are entrusted to the registrar, the watchman, the distributor of water, the astrologer, smith, carpenter, potter, barber, washerman and silver-smith. Whatever change the supreme authority in the kingdom may

undergo, into whatever hands it may pass by inheritance, usurpation or force of arms, whether its sovereigns be native or foreign, the constitution of each township remains unaltered; no *revolutions* affect it and no conquest changes it. Even when an overwhelming invasion or desolating inraid has compelled its members to leave their native seats, and to spend long years in exile, upon the first dawn of tranquillity they hasten back, and resume without resistance or contest their ancient inheritance. These numerous republics maintained in the centre of a powerful despotism have doubtless contributed largely to the prosperity which India has enjoyed; and yet they are too much scattered to exercise any permanent check on the absolute power of the princes and chieftains who dispute among themselves the mastery of that extensive region."

CHAPTER III

Village Money-lender.

A money-lender is said to be the back-bone of the economic organisation of a village. He therefore holds an important position in the body politic. At the present day he is supposed to be responsible for bringing about the ruin of the peasantry both by the officials and non-officials alike. In a previous chapter, we have tried to throw some light on this problem. It is not the place to fix the share of each individual in bringing the cultivator to this miserable condition, nor do we mean to enter into the controversy as to who is more responsible than others for it. Here we mean to show that the money-lender was not regarded a blood-sucking vampire of society as he is represented to be at the present time. And with this view we want to describe in some detail the condition of the Indian Society in ancient times and the position which the money-lender occupied in it,

MONEY-LENDER'S STATUS IN OLD VILLAGE

In the primitive Indian village, the money-lender used to supply the requirements of its peasant population. In times of emergency he was expected to give cash or grain on loan and realise it at the time of harvest or any other convenient time. The practice of borrowing has been in vogue since time immemorial. Even in the most prosperous countries, the need for borrowing exists and perhaps the amount of debt is far greater in a rich country than in a poor one. It is the system of realisation and the rate of interest charged that accounts for the prosperity or otherwise of a country. In prosperous countries money is easily borrowed on cheap rates of interest and with a small capital of one's own one can successfully start a large business or a factory but in poorer countries the rate of interest is so high that it swallows up the principal in a short time. In olden days the money-lender used to lend money to the cultivator but he had not the same position in the community as he has today. The Law Courts were not so easily accessible to him then as they are now and he had to depend entirely on the goodwill of the village community. Nor was it his aim to get money at any cost and to amass wealth by fair or foul means. Even if he wanted to follow this course, he was kept in check by the village punchayat. At the time of harvest, the accounts of the money-lender were settled in the presence of the village elders who allowed the money-lender a fair remuneration for his money but at the same time they saw that the debtor was not ruined or unnecessarily harassed. They were at perfect liberty to cut down the amount of debt, though the method used was persuasive and not coercive. In the same way they could take hold of all the belongings of the cultivator and sell them in lieu of his debt to the money-lender. The facts that generally weighed with the elders in such transactions, were that a cultivator should not be forced to starve on account of payments to the money-lender but at the same time, the latter also was not allowed to live at ease at the expense of the cultivator. The rate of interest was not less high than today;

2 per cent. per month being the usual rate of interest in case of unsecured debts. But in actual working this rate was never realised. Generally the price of the cattle and other property that were given in lieu of debt was calculated at a much higher rate than they could actually fetch in the market. To give an instance, suppose a peasant owed a debt of Rs. 225/- counting Rs. 200/- as principal and Rs. 25/- as interest to a money-lender and he was possessed of four heads of cattle really worth 210 rupees. The elders at the time of settlement would evaluate them ordinarily at Rs. 225/- and the debt would be discharged. They would see that the principal sum was paid to the creditor in full but the amount of interest was reduced in such a manner that there was no hardship on the creditor and the debtor was easily absolved from his liability. There was no Usurious Loans Act to reduce interest but authority to reduce the interest was vested in the village elders, who were respected and obeyed by all. The only commodities which had some market value were heads of cattle and agricultural produce. There was no abnormal fluctuation in rates nor was anybody to play with the currency of the country. The debt had a natural stability and the poor debtor was not forced to pay an exorbitant amount by an artificial manipulation of prices and currency. The land also, had no money value and therefore the creditor had no idea of taking it as security for his debt. The creditor was not allowed to sleep over his liability. It was a regular business of the elders to see that at the harvest time, all money-dealings were settled and no creditor was allowed to realise more than double the amount advanced by him. No formal documents had to be drawn up for such money-transactions and a man's word was worth much more than written contracts drawn up with irksome formalities on stamped parchments. An entry in the account-book of the creditor himself was much more trustworthy in those days than formally drawn up mortgages full of technical terms liable to various interpretations and legal quibbles. In those good old days, a debtor was never heard of who denied his liability, although there was no writing or stamp bearing his mark or signature.

"Under the native Government, it seems no assistance was, ordinarily, afforded by the State to a creditor for the recovery of his debts. No court of justice was open to him, and he was left to his own devices to extort what was due, Government winking at forcible measures that were occasionally employed. The result was not so bad as might have been expected. It speaks well for the national character that contracts were rarely repudiated. And the commissioners observed that in these proceedings honesty was the best policy for the ryot and caution was a necessity to the money-lender." (Extracts from the Proceedings of the Governor-General's Council, 17th July, 1897.)

DEBT OF HONOUR

If at anytime there was a debtor who was unable to pay, the creditor would ask him as a last resource to strike off the entries in the Bahi against him, an act considered so disgraceful and dishonest in society that no debtor would ever dare do it, but if any debtor did it, he was absolved from all further liabilities against him. Even in such cases whenever the debtor or even his sons and grandsons were in a position to pay, they deemed it an honour to repay the loan. It was

a common religious belief that if a man died without paying his creditors he was required to pay back his debts in the next life. With this belief, a debtor always tried to persuade his creditor to accept a smaller amount rather than forego his debt altogether. This idea has persisted even upto the present time though the sanctity has almost disappeared. Even now in Hindu Society, sons and grandsons consider it to be their pious duty to repay their father's debt and take over the liabilities even after his death, and the law also upholds it. The Royal Agricultural Commission in their report have pointed out this fact and have deplored the existence of such a custom. They remark, "We are informed, however, that it is a common practice for a money-lender, who has no remedy by law, to approach the son or some other relative of the deceased and putting the matter on the grounds of legal obligation or religious duty, to induce such son or relative to regard the debt as an original debt of honour." (Page 440.) Honesty was the main ideal on both sides and both the creditors and the debtors considered it to be their duty to be straightforward in their dealings. Even if any of the parties tried to be dishonest the real facts were at once revealed to the punchayat at the time of investigation.

A money-lender was respected in the village but his status was not one of superiority. He was under the protection of village elders and nobody could injure him. Whenever any calamity fell upon him, the whole village would try to save him and his family from molestation even at the cost of their lives. Similarly at the time of famine or scarcity the money-lender used to open his granaries for the use of the villagers. He believed and rightly too that he would sink or swim with his fellow villagers. All his wealth and riches were for the service of his villagers and the whole village community was behind him in times of danger. The principles of a real corporate life were recognised and practised by both sides.

In days gone by, one had not to go to an Insolvency Court and advertise oneself as insolvent. There was nobody who would keep any assets and refuse to pay his creditors. If a man was really found to be incapable to meet his liabilities he was at once absolved from them both by the creditor and the punchayat. In those days poverty was not considered to be a sin nor wealth a mark of respect. Human society was not based on considerations of wealth alone and the money-lender was there to meet the requirements of the society and not to enslave the people by means of his wealth. He was to help people in the economic uplift and not to exploit them for his own benefit.

CHAPTER IV

Education.

LITERACY IN OLD INDIA

It is generally believed that in old India education was not so common as it is today nor was literacy deemed to an ideal worthy of achievement. It is said that the Government did not consider it to be its duty to provide facilities for general education. There were no schools, colleges or universities, run by the State. Scientific and technical education was not provided nor were there any arrangements made by the Government to train its subjects in the various useful arts so necessary for a civilised society. It is not the place to enter into this controversy and to prove that there were ampler and better opportunities and facilities for the education of the children of the soil in those days than are found in present day India. We may however state for the information of our readers that the percentage of literacy has gone down in these days rather than gone up. It may be true that the people then did not care so much for scientific as for religious education but this does not mean that secular education was altogether neglected. In accordance with the Hindu Shastras, the Dwijas, viz., the Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas had to learn at least one out of the four Vedas. Thus three-fourths of the population were bound by religion to get an insight into the highest work on philosophy and religion which involved a careful and regular study of the Sanskrit language. Only the Shudras were debarred from studying the Vedas, but it did not mean that illiteracy was enjoined upon them. In the Chhandogya we find a passage where King Ashvapati is said to have stated that there was not a single person in his kingdom who was illiterate. It gives us an insight into the conditions prevailing in those days and clearly shows that the kings in those days not only believed in mass education but took pleasure in expressing satisfaction at the result attained in this respect within their kingdom. It is true that the system of education was quite different from the one in vogue today but it is from the result that we can judge of the comparative efficacy of the two systems.

We therefore take the liberty of quoting at some length from "Village Government in British India" on this subject. On page 39 the author observes as follows, "The history of village education in India goes back perhaps to the beginnings of the village community. The Schoolmaster had a definite place assigned to him in the village economy, in the same manner as the headman, the accountant, the watchman, and the artisans. He was an officer of the village community, paid either by rent-free lands or by assignments of grain out of the village harvest. In all likelihood, the earliest schoolmaster was the Brahman priest of the village, who offered worship to the village deity on behalf of the different classes of people who lived in the village. From this function discharged by the priest followed his subsidiary function of imparting

instruction to those castes who were either of the 'Twice born' (the superior castes), or were in any way connected with the 'Twice born' and felt the obligation of acquiring letters. The earliest Shastric injunctions bearing on the duties of priests laid upon them the obligation not merely of ministering to religion, but of imparting instruction in the rudiments of knowledge. In the lands which supported the priestly schoolmaster were the lands set apart for the village idol, and this income was usually supplemented by free will offerings from the scholars and their parents." Further on he says on page 40, "The outstanding characteristics of the schools of the Hindu village community were (i) that they were more secular than spiritual in their instruction and their general character.....anything in the nature of direct religious instruction was unknown. When we speak of the democratic character of these early Hindu schools, it is to be understood that they were democratic only in this sense, that they were open not merely to the priestly caste but to all the four superior castes alike. The principal ingredients of the village curriculum were reading, writing, and arithmetic in the vernacular, with occasionally a dose of Sanskrit, grammar and poetry."

It may not be out of place to mention here that the number of literates was very high in those days. Unfortunately there is no reliable record of those days and even the census taken at different intervals does not afford any reliable data as the figures are based more on impression than on actual facts but Reverend Keay who has made careful researches in the matter, has mentioned in some detail the conditions prevailing here before the British raj. He says in his book "Ancient Indian Education", "There was then, before the British Government took over control of education in India, a widespread, popular, indigenous system. It was not confined to one or two provinces, but was found in various parts of India, though some districts were more advanced than others. In the inquiry made for the Madras Presidency in 1922-26, it was calculated that rather less than one-sixth of the boys of school-going age received education of some sort. In the similar enquiry made for the Bombay Presidency (1823-28) the number of boys under instruction was put down as about one in every eight. In one of the districts in Bengal, where Adam carried out his inquiry, he found 13.2 per cent. of the whole male population receiving instruction. In another district he found 9 per cent. of all children of school-going age under instruction." Compare the above figures with the figures of census of 1921. According to it out of a total population of 247 millions in British India, only 22.6 millions were literate. Of this number 19.8 millions were males and 2.8 millions females. During the year 1926, 10.51 millions of pupils or 4.25 per cent. of the total population were undergoing instruction of some kind, 7.8 millions in primary schools, 1.72 millions in secondary schools, .29 millions in special schools, .08 millions in universities and .62 millions in recognised institutions. (India in 1926-27 p. 315.)

Dr. Leitener in his book "History of Indigenous Education in Punjab" on page 14 says, "Of this district the public returns gave 171 schools with 3,700 pupils; the first returns of the district officers for 1878-79 gave 302 schools with 5,454 pupils, but when Mr. Miller took the matter in hand, the existence of 681 schools with 7,145 pupils was

ascertained," Dr. Leitener was the first principal of Lahore College and later on he served as the Director of Public Instruction in the province.

Mr. Howell also states, "There is no doubt that from time immemorial indigenous schools have existed, as here alleged. In Bengal alone, in 1835, Mr. Adam estimated their number to be 100,000; in Madras, upon an enquiry instituted by Sir Thomas Munro in 1822 the number of schools was reported to be 12,498, containing 186,650 scholars; and in Bombay, about the same period, schools of a similar order were found to be scattered all over the presidency. It is much to be regretted that, as each province fell under our rule, the Government did not take advantage of the time when the prestige of conquest or gratitude for delivery from war and oppression were strong in popular mind, to make the village school an important feature in the village system that was almost everywhere transmitted to us." An Inspector of schools of Bengal who was deputed to visit the schools of the Punjab in 1868 remarks in his report. "The indigenous education of India was founded on the sanction of the Shastras, which elevated it into religious duties and conferred dignity on the communities which left not only their municipal, but also in part their revenue and judicial administrations, in the hands of the people themselves, greatly helped to spread education among all the different members of the community. He will see the fruits of the indigenous system in the numberless pathshalas, chatsals and tolls which still overspread the country, and which, however wretched their present condition, prove by their continued existence, in spite of neglect, contempt, and other adverse circumstances of a thousand years, the strong stamina they acquired at their birth. At the present day, the religious sanction is growing weak, the village communities are nearly gone, manufacturing industry has come to the verge of ruin, the heaviest incidence of taxation is falling upon land, and a foreign language has become the language of court and commerce. The natural incentives to popular education being thus weak, its progress will depend on the efforts of an enlightened Government inclined to compensate to the people for their losses under foreign rule." Dr. Leitener whom we have quoted above, writes on page 3 of his report, "In backward districts, like that of Hoshiarpur, the Settlement Report of 1852 shows a school to every 19.65 male inhabitants (adults and non-adults), which may be contrasted with the present proportion of one Government or aided school to every 2818.7 inhabitants." Writing about the entire province he says, "Including the since incorporated Delhi and Hissar Divisions, which now contain 4,476 towns and villages, there were, in 1854 (when an incomplete census was taken), 33,355 towns and villages, and presumably the same number in 1849. Assuming, at least, the existence of 33,365 mosques, temples, dharamshalas and other sacred edifices in which some teaching was carried on (not to count the 3,372 indigenous secular schools which were ascertained to exist in 1854 or to speak of the large number of schools held in the houses of teachers and giving each 'Ollégium' of pupils an average attendance of 10), we shall get, at least, 333,550 persons assumed to attend Government and aided schools (According to the last census the total number 'under education' of every kind would only be 157,623). What the state of education was

in the time of Ranjit Singh may be inferred from the enumeration of Sikh authors in a previous chapter. The list of men distinguished for learning in other denominations is even more lengthy; whilst the evidence of our own Administration and Settlement Report (so far as I have been allowed to see them), is conclusive as to the general spread of the elements of education in the province."

FEMALE EDUCATION

Not only the males were literate but education was found amongst women also. Dr. Leitener on page 97-8 of his report says, "The Punjabi woman has, however, not only been always more or less educated herself but she has also been an educator of others. In Delhi, for instance, we find that six public schools for girls were kept by Punjabi women, who had emigrated to the South for this purpose.

"In other places, similarly. Panjabi women were to be found as teachers, just as the Guru or the Padha spread his instruction beyond the precincts of a province where he was becoming a drug in the market. Among Muhammadans, very many widows considered it a sacred duty to teach girls to read the Koran, and though Delhi, like the rest of the North-Western Provinces, was far behind the Punjab in female education, we find that it had in 1845 numerous schools for girls kept in private houses."

Dr. Leitener, giving his evidence before the Education Commission of 1882 gave interesting details of the indigenous system for girls. It will not be out of place to mention a portion of his answer to a question put to him in details as it will throw light on the subject of girl education in India before the advent of British Rule.....

"Q. 41. Is there indigenous instruction for girls in the province with which you are acquainted; and, if so, what is its character?

"A. 41. Yes; the wives of Maulvis and Bhais, for instance, are generally taught by their husbands and instruct their children upto a certain age in reading and religious duties. The wives of the respectable Muhammadans generally can also read and write, (though the latter attainment is not so much encouraged as the former for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter). Some of the ladies are good Persian scholars, and in a distinguished Muhammadan family that I know, I have been given to understand that several of the ladies are excellent poets. The position of women is far higher among Muhammadans and Sikhs than is supposed, and there is no prejudice against their being educated, provided this can be done without interfering with the privacy of their domestic life. There are in proportion as many women that can read in Native States, where there has been no fuss made about female education, as there are in British territory, whilst in the latter also I have no doubt that many respectable women can read and write..... There have always been indigenous schools for Sikh females in the districts between the Chenab and the Attock. That the wives of priests should visit females of their community and teach them, is right and proper, but that girls, specially of a marriageable age, should cross bazaars in order to assemble in a school, is, I think, objectionable. Much reading of elementary religious books, sewing, embroidery, cooking with extreme care for the household, great

neatness, tenderness in trouble, and gentle mediation in family disputes constitute the chief feature of female home rule and education in the better classes, who regard their female relatives with a respect and a religious affection of which we have not even the outward profession in Europe."

Dr. Leitencer discussing the passing away of the old system in the Punjab mentions the following causes:—

CAUSES OF DECAY IN EDUCATION

"That the Board of Administration in the Punjab was ordered to resume rent-free tenures of land, even in the case of schools and religious edifices when their endowments were large, thus following the example of the land resumption in Bengal. (Italics are ours.)"

"That in consequence most of the endowments of indigenous schools were gradually destroyed.

"That the action of the Educational Department of the Punjab in spite of constant reminders, tended to destroy the indigenous schools whilst neglecting its own primary schools." (Italics are ours.)

The above quotations taken from English Authors and official Reports are enough to convince the readers about the extent of literacy in old India. The system of education though different was complete and very well suited to the needs of the people. Reverend Keays in the closing chapter of his book on page 169 describes it as follows, "Few countries, and certainly no Western ones, have had systems of education which have had such a long and continuous history with so few modifications as some of the educational systems of India. The long centuries through which they have held sway show that they must have possessed elements which were of value, and that they were not unsuited to the needs of those who developed and adopted them. They produced many great men and earnest seekers after truth, and their output on the intellectual side is by no means inconsiderable. They developed many noble educational ideals, which are a valuable contribution to educational thought and practice." As we have written above the organisation of education was so complete and well arranged that the Wars and Revolutions had no effect upon it. As Howell in his book "Education in British India" says, "This venerable and benevolent institution of the Hindus is represented to have withstood the shock of revolutions, and to its operation is ascribed the general intelligence of the natives as scribes and accountants."

One-fourth of the population of India considered it to be their religious duty to impart education to others. Brahmans, though poor, took special delight in giving the best education to their pupils. Throughout their life their aim was to acquire knowledge and to impart it to their fellow brethren. They lived to learn and educate. The readers should bear in mind that for this labour of love and humanity they did not get any fixed salary or remuneration either from the Government or from the village community. It was considered to be a sin to accept anything for imparting education. Selling of knowledge was considered to be a sacrilege. No doubt they were supported by the village community by grants of free land and by charity given on ceremonial occa-

sions. But it was considered to be very degrading to accept anything in lieu of the work done in a school. The Government would not charge any revenue from the lands in the possession of the teachers. For big universities and higher classes, the Government allowed suitable grants but even there the teachers will not work as servants. They used to teach not because they were paid but because they considered it to be their religious duty to do so. They would accept food and lodging or things required for their physical needs at those universities. Pupils also were not charged any fees. Schools and colleges were not a sort of trade or place of employment to the teacher. The author of the "Village Government in British India" has admitted this and he says in his book on page 46, "The tradition of gratuitous instruction is still so strong in the country that the payment of fee in a village school is regarded with somewhat unconcealed prejudice. This probably accounts for the large share taken by occasional presents in the composition of a teacher's income, it being supposed to be a less flagrant violation of the national instinct against paid instruction."

TEACHING A LABOUR OF LOVE

A teacher with whom imparting of education is a labour of love will decidedly impart education of the highest type and in the shortest period. It will be an ideal thing to achieve. The nation which can secure a band of such selfless workers, deserves congratulations and who can mould the characters of its younger generation better? But unfortunately the system has now disappeared. There can be no doubt that in old India before the advent of the British Rule a system of education existed, which could compare most favourably with the most developed modern systems then prevailing in the world.

The aim of education was character building, to enable a people to live a better life morally and spiritually. It was not an article of trade. Nobody cared to learn it for the sake of service, and everybody acquired education with the highest ideal of service of humanity in the real sense of the term.

It is very difficult for us to realize the beauty of this wonderful system of education prevailing in old India. This system still exists in Burma where fortunately the British Government have allowed it to survive after the experiment had proved a failure in British India. There are monasteries and temples attached to every village with a grant of land attached to them. Every child of the village goes to this monastery to learn letters and the monk considers it to be his religious duty to impart education to him. The monk lives on charity and the land granted by the village. He does not charge anything from the pupils and lives up to the old ideal of a Brahman of the Vedic period. This is why the literacy in both the sexes is the highest in Burma.

CHAPTER V.

Change and its effect

In the Hindu period villages were knit together into districts or provinces over which there existed the paramount power of the king. But every village was a complete unit in itself as regards its own internal Government and economical control. It had its own local administration which was empowered to administer justice and to look to the local needs and requirements. There was then no interference by any outside agency in ordinary civil or criminal administration of justice, as it exists today.

ISOLATED VILLAGE IN MOHAMMADAN RULE

During the Mohammadan Rule, the village community was left more or less to its own resources by the central paramount power except for the payment of taxes; so long as these were paid regularly there was no inducement to any interference for a Government like that of the Moghuls in matters of local administration. The constitution of village communities and their administration, therefore, continued as before and the old customs and usages of the Hindu period prevailed during the Mohammadan period also. People enjoyed the same old rights and privileges and nothing was done by the Mohammadan rulers to disturb the old conditions of society. A Mohammadan king mostly cared for power and pelf. A few foreign conquerors, it is true, robbed the people of their valuables and carried them to their country but it was just like a raid committed by a band of marauders. But when they established their sovereignty, they merged themselves amongst the people and adopted their language and customs to a great extent. They joined in their sorrows and joys and except for the difference of religion they became part and parcel of the inhabitants of the country. It is unfortunately true that some of the Mohammadan rulers went out of their way and in their religious zeal and fervour tried to convert the people of this country to their own faith by force. In order to achieve this end some of them even followed objectionable practices but in spite of these facts it can be asserted without fear of contradiction that during the Mohammadan Rule India did not suffer from economic ruin and exploitation at the hands of the rulers. During their regime arts and trades flourished under their patronage. They tried in their own way to increase and develop the industries of the country. Some of them tried to systematize the different departments of the Government and tried to put them on a sound scientific basis. It is not our purpose to enter into the merits of Mohammadan Rule nor is it our desire to compare the Mohammadan Rule with the present system of Government. In a book dealing with purely economic matters, politics of this sort has no place. Our only purpose is to state facts so that a systematic study of the causes of our economic downfall may be correctly traced.

The British came to this country as traders. Their chief aim was to export manufactured articles from this country into their own and make enormous profits out of these commercial transactions. Money

and money alone was their attraction which brought them to these shores. They had nothing in common with the people of this vast continent and as members of a great trading concern they tried to acquire as much influence as possible with the local magnates and satraps. The Mohammadan Rule was then tottering. The power of the central ruling authority was on its last legs and forces were gathering to break it up into pieces. The Mohammadan rulers had no direct connection with the village as we have pointed above, and their only concern was to get their fixed portion of the produce in recognition of their sovereign rights. It was therefore the same to them whether their portion was paid by the people directly or it was paid through some other agency. They sold away this right to English traders thereby creating a sort of dual control in certain territories. These foreigners adopted all the ways and means by which they could collect the largest amount of money without caring in the least as to how it will affect the welfare of the people. In their own interest they opposed all kinds of organization in villages as it was not possible to have a thorough hold upon the latter for the purpose of their trade if the village communities continued to function as before.

The author of the "Village Government in British India" on page 167 remarks, "It is clear that from the beginning there was a somewhat strong feeling among the officers of the East India Company against the constitution of panchayat in ordinary dispute." This antagonism was natural and was meant to serve the best interests of their community.

Gradually the power of the officials of the East India Company went on increasing and it became a sort of mixture of the functions of a ruler and a trader combined. They were traders by instinct and all their actions were dictated by the one idea of making money. If they fought battles, acquired properties and secured sovereign rights over certain parts of the country they did so only for the purpose of making money as they felt that by adopting any of these methods they would be increasing their profits as traders. There is an Indian proverb

"Banya Hakam Ghazab Khuda."

It means that it is a great calamity if a trader becomes a ruler. The interests of a ruler are quite distinct from that of a trader. The trader wants to exploit, while it is the duty of a ruler to protect. Exploitation and protection can never go hand in hand. But when the exploiter himself becomes the ruler there is none to protect and exploitation becomes rampant and this is what happened in the case in India under the East India Company.

During this period and for sometime even before the advent of the East India Company, the village community had to face very hard times. These were the days of disintegration of the village organization. The English traders did not know the language of the country and were quite ignorant of the customs and usages prevailing therein. When power passed into their hands they considered themselves to be superior beings and did not mix freely with the people. They do not mix more freely among the people even now, nor do they partake of their joys and sorrows. They also did not care to study the people of the country, their social customs or the basic prin-

ciples of their civilization. Even after 1857 when the government of India passed into the hands of the British Parliament, the conditions remained much the same and even then no direct contact was established between the rulers and the ruled.

SECRET OF SUCCESS OF BRITISH RULE

The history of the British Rule in India affords ample instances of the spirit of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice of the people of England for the sake of their country. At the very beginning of British connection with India we find Sir Thomas Roe beseeching the Indian monarch in 1615 for the grant of trading rights in favour of his community and not for himself. So Britishers in this country never demanded any rights individually for themselves or for their posterity and like true patriots they worked for the good of England and England alone. Even when Lord Clive assumed the role of a soldier and had to fight a number of battles at great personal risk, he did it only to enrich his country and to consolidate its power against that of its enemies. The Viceroy or the Governors-General sent to India, by the British Parliament although exercising unlimited authority and control never tried to usurp that power for themselves. They faithfully and loyally served their country although they had full control over the military and other departments of administration for the time being. The actions of the Mohamadan Governors stand in naked contrast to the spirit of patriotism and devotion displayed by the Britishers. Nearly everyone of them rebelled against his master whenever an opportunity offered itself. This sense of patriotism is still missing in the people of this unfortunate country where even the highest in the land may be prevailed upon to betray the interests of their motherland. This trait of character in the Englishman naturally created a feeling of superiority in his mind and he came to look down upon the natives of the country. He considered them unfit to hold any position of trust in their own country and, therefore, when organized Government was established every high post was given to Englishmen. In the days of the Mohammadan Rule it was possible for a Hindu to occupy the highest post in the State, he could be the commander-in-chief of the army or be the highest provincial authority. Even the Maharatta chief Shivaji could employ a Mohammadan general, but no Indian could hold these posts of responsibility under the British Government. It may be that the underlying motive was different, possibly the idea of benefitting the people of their own country may be at the root of this differentiation or the British people may have considered it necessary for maintaining their hold on this vast continent to keep the key-posts to themselves so that the secrets of administration may not leak out, or there may yet be a third reason based on social grounds that Englishmen did not like the idea of serving under an Indian. It is not for us to determine which of the causes was responsible for it, but the fact remains that even upto this day in spite of bombastic promises for Indianization of the army and certain other departments remain still unfulfilled or only partially fulfilled. In the Railway Board which is only a commercial concern no Indian has been allowed to enter its sacred precincts.

Even after a rule extending over more than a century and a half Englishmen have not been able to acquire command over the Indian languages nor have they ever cared to do so. The Englishman has always taken pride in keeping himself aloof from the people and even when he has to mix with them the spirit of aloofness and superiority governs his manners and actions. The result is that Indians have not been able to imbibe the good traits of character which an Englishman possesses, though they have tried to imitate him in external matters of costume and other things. India has to pay a very large amount of money in the shape of salaries and pensions which go out of the country. Over and above this, the most important loss to the country is the loss of knowledge and experience acquired by Englishmen during their period of stay in this country. This knowledge and experience acquired at the expense of India is utilized by the people of England and even after their retirement India has to pay them pensions. The Government have kept the education of the people under their absolute control. They have prescribed the subjects which will be taught in the schools and colleges established or recognized by them as also the text-books. The medium of instruction also was fixed to be English throughout. Even the classical languages and vernaculars were taught with the help of English. Colleges and schools imparted instruction mostly through the medium of the English language. Books on technical subjects, science and art were only available in English. This resulted in bringing the vernaculars into disrepute. This has had a very injurious effect on the minds of educated Indians. They have not only adopted English dress but have so thoroughly imbibed English ideas that they have begun to look upon everything Indian with disdain. Being ignorant of their own culture they have become more foreigners than foreigners themselves. Indian dress and customs and manners occupy a lower place in their eyes. The British officials generally dislike the idea of an educated Indian appearing in Indian dress, and try to engraft the same on their subordinates. Englishmen also tried to introduce everything English in the country and created an atmosphere whereby an Indian has become a stranger in his own land. Even Sir Henry S. Maine has to admit this in his well-known book "Village Community in the East and West" page 25. He says, "I have had unusual opportunities of studying the mental condition of the educated class in one Indian province. Though it is so strongly Europeanized as to be no fair sample of native society taken as a whole, its peculiar stock of ideas is probably the chief source from which the influences proceed which are more or less at work everywhere. Here there has been a complete revolution of thought, in literature, in taste, in morals and in law. I can only compare it to the passion for the literature of Greece and Rome which overtook the western world at the revival of letters; and yet the comparison did not altogether hold, since I must honestly admit that much which had a grandeur of its own is being replaced by a great deal which is poor and ignoble."

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE THROUGH COURTS OF LAW

The English people either deliberately or unconsciously in their zeal to improve their own culture discouraged the authority of the village community and introduced their own methods of administering

justice. The punchayats today have no legal sanction to administer justice. Even in civil cases they cannot give an award without the help of the court. Even if they do it nobody would respect their decrees as the sanction behind them has disappeared under the new conditions. If they adopt the old methods of general disapprobation by out-casting people going against the wishes of the village community, the leaders of the village are hauled up in a court of law and have to pay heavy damages. In cases of a criminal nature if they happen to be cognizable offences, the village community have no authority to interfere in any way and if they do so they are liable to be prosecuted. When the authority of the village community is thus set at naught their functionaries naturally disappear.

VILLAGE MUKHIA UNDER THE NEW REGIME

The present government has recognized the old system of appointing a chaukidar, a mukhia and a patwari in every village or group of villages. But while recognizing the utility of these functionaries the Government has destroyed altogether the high purpose for which they used to be appointed under the village community. A mukhia is no more a servant of the people, nor is he selected by the people. Generally the local police makes a report and the S. D. M. appoints him. Those who carry tales to the police or want to get influence amongst the locality with the police help or who want to abuse their power are proposed for such appointments. Good and honest gentlemen do not care to get themselves so nominated or appointed. They are always afraid of the harassment that is the lot of a mukhia when any serious offence is committed in the village. Regarding the general character of the village headman as an officer of the police the following words were used in a resolution appended to the United Provinces Police Report, 1910. "The village headman is for the most part what the district officer makes him, and the success or failure of the system lies in the hands of those who administer it. At the best, the village headman can be a most useful connecting link between the police and the people, who can give assistance to the former and smooth the path of the latter. He can increase the efficiency and the honesty of police work in villages, can mitigate popular prejudice, and remove misunderstandings. But at the worst, he will be the jackal of the least scrupulous members of the force." His function is no more to look after the welfare of the village or to see that quarrels and disputes are amicably settled. His first and foremost duty is to inform the police of any incident that has taken place in the village. The author of the "Village Government in British India" has rightly described his position when he says, "It must also be remembered that the headman was becoming increasingly rather a representative of the Government than a man of the people; and the large powers given to him in the constitution and conduct of punchayats were not likely to impress the villagers with the popular character of the institution." (Page 174.)

VILLAGE CHAUKIDAR

The chaukidar gets a fixed salary from the Government treasury. Owing to the financial stringency his pay has now been reduced to Rs. 1-14. He does not get free grants of land any more nor a part of the produce is allowed to him as before. No more does he feel that he is

responsible if a theft or dacoity takes place in the village. Formerly he was made to pay the loss by a theft which always kept him quite alert but now the Government considers that their only duty in a case of theft or dacoity is to try to trace the culprit and get him convicted. They no more hold themselves responsible for the loss that a subject has to suffer by the negligence of its servants. The old principle that an individual who has been robbed of his valuables should be reimbursed by the State for the loss suffered by him is no longer recognised to be a sound principle. Had this been so no body would have considered it worth his while to join the police force. A chaukidar is the connecting link between the police and the people. His position though recognised to be quite important has nothing to do with any obligation on his part to the community at large. He is only a public servant in legal phraseology but in reality he is only a tool of the subordinate police.

VILLAGE PATWARI UNDER PRESENT RULE

The patwari still maintains the revenue papers. It is true that the entries are more elaborate and systematic than before but again he is no more a servant of the people. A corrupt village patwari is a fresh source of oppression to the poor villagers. He is no more paid by the village community and therefore the people of the village have no authority over him. In the revenue courts his testimony counts a lot. A poor, illiterate cultivator cannot know whether his name is rightly entered against the plots of land held by him. He can be made to pay rent for the land which he never cultivated or he may be debarred from acquiring occupancy rights, though he might have cultivated the land continuously from generations together, by a single stroke of the patwari's pen. In law he may have a right to demand a copy of the village papers but it is an open secret that it is a very difficult job to get it without payment. The U. P. Government perhaps thinking that they could not cure the evil have now legalised it and have fixed a fee for the patwari for issuing copies of his registers. It is 4 as. per copy but a patwari will not be true to himself if he charges less than a rupee.

The village community is thus disintegrated and entirely disorganised and its main functionaries have been incorporated into the cadre of Government servants, and the whole power is centralized in the Government. The respect for elders and their influence are now at a great discount.

LAW COURTS

Mr. James Caird who was sent out from England as a member of the Indian Famine Commission in 1880, on his return to England submitted a report to Lord Salisbury on the causes of agricultural distress in India. He expressed his firm opinion that "The decay of village institutions was one of the chief causes of that distress." Grievances are now to be ventilated through the courts of law and the various Acts of the Legislatures and the decisions of courts being all published in English the people have no means of knowing their rights and remedies. If they go to a court of law for redress they have to pay heavy court fees which in certain cases are prohibitive. Even if he somehow manages to pay for the necessary court fee he is unable to have direct access to the court and a lawyer is needed to represent him for getting justice. If after going through all those vexatious process of the law he gets an order

of court in his favour there is an appellate court to reverse the order of the first court on the very evidence which was tendered before the trial court, and still the poor man has to learn that there is a High Court and a Privy Council, and he learns to his misfortune that a longer purse always wins in the end.

No less an authority than the Royal Agricultural Commission have had to admit that there is less regard for truth in Indian courts of law. While quoting the Famine Commission Report of 1912 on page 438 of their report they stated, "It is a contest of dishonesty, in which that side is likely to gain the upper hand which is prepared to go furthest in perjury and in the production of all his evidence. Witness after witness has testified to this demoralisation. Distrust has been engineered on both sides. The honest Shoukar and honest cultivator suffer alike since in their dealing with one another, they have to allow for the judgment of court which will presume dishonesty on both sides."

The drain through the high officials of the Government and through the court fees has gone a good deal towards the impoverishment of the people but add to this the land revenue that is increasing every 30 years. In olden times everybody who cultivated land had to contribute a portion of the produce to the Government. It is sometimes stated that the proportion thus realised was much higher than it is today. The Government in their well-known resolution of 1902 tried to prove that the incidence of land revenue under the present regime is much lower than it was in the Mohammadan rule. But they conveniently forget that under the Mohammadan rule the person aggrieved got justice without payment. And further, he was not liable to pay a number of other taxes which he has to pay now. Large areas of common land were used for pasture or given as free grants in lieu of services rendered to the community and the contribution to Government treasury was always proportionate to the produce and was not fixed in money-value. However this is not a place for us to enter into this controversy.

LAND OWNERS

In olden days the land belonged to the entire community and there existed no right of private ownership in it, while now in most of the provinces the zemindars who were simply tax gatherers under the Mohammadan rule have been turned into owners of the land. The result of this system is that rack-renting on a large scale is the order of the day. The zemindar wants to exact the last pie that the cultivator is likely to pay. Every year barring the last 2 years of depression he has been trying to increase the rent by pitting one tenant against another. He knows full well that the only occupation open to the villager is agriculture and he takes an undue advantage of this. The Government also enjoys the benefit of this rack-renting as every increase in rent is taken advantage of at the time of settlement and it goes towards further enhancement of revenue. In the old days there was no rent exacted from anybody. Every cultivator was the sole owner of the produce after paying his quota to the Government. The right of the village community in the allotment of common land has passed away. Every bit of land is assessed with revenue, it does not matter if it is a grant to a temple or to an institution. This position has forced the

people to bring in every inch of land under the plough. Now there are no lands for pasture. Only barren and sterile patches are available for this purpose, not because people do not like to cultivate them but because they are unculturable. Milch cattle are starving and the breeding of good cows and buffaloes is suffering. Most of the people being vegetarians there is a general decrease in vitality on account of want of sufficient supply of milk and milk products. Infant mortality is increasing every where, and the number of strong, healthy and robust young men is decreasing rapidly.

The English came here as traders and they put the idea of the prosperity of their own country in the forefront. Scientific inventions and labour-saving devices and machinery for manufacturing different articles of daily use have proved a curse instead of a blessing in the case of Indian Cottage Industries and hand crafts have been killed one by one and hundreds of thousands of artisans have been thrown out of work and have become field labourers or petty cultivators. The skill of ages has been swept away. The fingers that manufactured fine articles which were at once the wonder and envy of the foreign artisans which they could admire but never imitate are now engaged in wielding the spade or the shovel at fields and railway and canal embankments.

Tinsels have taken the place of finely chiselled and finished articles of Indian workmanship. Worthless articles of foreign make have dumped the Indian markets and have put Indians out of pocket to the tune of crores of rupees. Motor cars, lorries, cinemas, radios, etc., are swallowing lacs of Indian money. The economic ruin which has overwhelmed India is without a parallel in the history of the world. Machine-made cheap articles imported from distant countries are taken to the very door of the villager with the result that the services of the Indian artisan are no longer required, the farmer's wife no more gins or spins, the weaver's loom does not ply. The oilman is no more required in the economy of a village as kerosene oil is available in the nearest market. Clumsy but durable shoes manufactured by the village cobbler are no more in use; cheap and attractive foot-wear of foreign make has driven them from the market for ever. The beautiful and light Salem Shahi with flowery designs of gold and silver threads are used no more by the gentry of high rank. They take pride in wearing pump shoes of foreign manufacture. Indian pottery is replaced by crockery imported from outside or by utensils made of sheet metal imported from abroad. Even the small income that could be eked out in times of unemployment by the plying of carts on hire is being replaced by high speed lorries. In short every artisan is thrown out of employment. There is no demand for his skill. Even a farmer is forced to produce only such raw material as can be exported abroad. Raw materials like grain and pulses, oil seeds and the like can be exported to foreign countries generally without any duty but if flour or oil is sent out these commodities are subject to a high import duty. Butter, cheese and other milk produce cannot be sold in the Indian market because of the free adulteration of lard and oil. There is no legislative measure to stop adulteration and wherever one exists it is neither adequate nor effective. In this way a large number of people has been thrown out of employment and the whole pressure has fallen

on land. Elsewhere we have given a table to show that the population living on agriculture is daily increasing in India while in other countries it is on the decrease.

MONEY-LENDER AND SANCTITY OF CONTRACT

The money-lender who was considered to be the backbone of society has no longer to depend upon the goodwill of the people. He has been taught his individual rights and the civil courts in the name of sanctity of contract have placed a weapon in his hand which he can use at will to the ruin of his unfortunate debtors. As far back as 1880 the Famine Commission stated (Para. 132). "Contracts, the extravagant one-sidedness of which bespeaks a sense of hopeless weakness, on the one side and a spirit of unscrupulous exaction on the other, have been enforced by the civil courts with too mechanical an adherence to the letter of the law, and too little regard to the circumstances of the parties and the substantial merits of the case. Native customs which tempered the severity of contracts such, for instance, as that which restrained the rate or amount of interest have been swept away and a rigid and elaborate legal system has too often proved only an additional instrument of oppression in the hands of the more wealthy or better instructed litigant and an additional cause of the impoverished agriculturist." Further in para 134 they observed:—"It is we think deserving of consideration whether the existing law of contract and the rules of procedure provide adequately for the case of the ignorant peasant in any transaction which goes beyond the scope of their ordinary life. It is characteristic of these classes to promise anything, to submit to any condition for the future, if only relief for the present can be secured; and it is dealing with such cases that the Indian courts are said to fail in providing adequate protection." Several committees and commissions recommended a simple and easy Rural Insolvency Act to give relief to the peasant but nothing has so far been done nor is anything likely to be done in the near future.

Thus there has come about a change both in the constitution of the village communities and in the social customs prevailing in the land which have affected the poor cultivator both socially and economically. Nobody is responsible now for the sanitation or other useful services in the villages. The District Boards are constituted in such a fashion that they are either powerless or they have no funds to carry out any of these important duties, which are so vital to the interests of the cultivator.

The old method of imparting education has also died away altogether. There are no Brahman priests who used to take pride in imparting education to the children of the soil and even if there are any who try to follow the old ideal they have either to starve or to live from hand to mouth on the doles or grants that may be allowed to them by the District Board. This meagre aid is also curtailed or denied if the education that he wants to impart does not follow the curriculum and the system prescribed by the Text Book Committee of the Government. The Government has not been able to replace the old system by any other equally efficacious system by which literacy could be made general and compulsory.

CHAPTER VI.

Is India an agricultural country?

It has been asserted times out of number that India is an agricultural country. We are made to believe that nature has ordained India to produce raw materials for export to other countries and receive finished products in lieu thereof. This idea has been so persistently impressed upon our educated classes that most of them have really begun to believe in it and to assert it with equal vehemence whenever it is challenged by those who hold contrary views. This mistaken belief is responsible for a number of other wrong notions now prevailing among the educated classes about the question of Indian poverty. It is therefore necessary to deal with this question in some detail, specially in view of the fact that it has got a good deal of support in Government reports, in the press and on the platform. In examining this question we shall try to avoid controversial matters as far as possible. The author of the "Government and Industry" has very rightly pointed out that the western countries try to get their supply of raw material from the tropical countries and they are bound to do so as long as they can. He says, "In the abstract it may be undesirable to extract from tropical countries the large supplies of raw material and food-stuff to which we have become accustomed, especially if the necessary conditions for the maintenance of their supply is the exploitation or partial enslavement of natives. We are however committed by the past. We cannot immediately reverse the tendency of a country and perhaps we shall never be able to do so." He further stated the method by which the above object is tried to be achieved. We give below the statement in the words of the author himself. He quotes a member of the Parliament in order to strengthen his assertion. He states, "Mr. Chamberlain believed that the natives should be made to work for their own good." In a speech in the House of Commons he said, "The progress of the native in civilisation will not be secured until he has been convinced of the necessity of labour and it has been found that a useful method of convincing natives is first to take from them the land from which they need to derive their livelihood; secondly, to confine them to 'Reserves' from which they can only obtain a meagre livelihood for a few; and, thirdly, to tax them of an amount which can be paid only if they work for wages."

The above quotation requires no comment and speaks for itself. The author exclaims, "The argument that it is good for the natives is not new and has always been applied to the subject races."

INDIA EXPORTS RAW MATERIAL AND IMPORTS FINISHED GOODS

It is unfortunately correct that India supplies raw materials to other countries and a major portion of manufactured goods is imported from abroad for its own needs. From the perusal of the Indian Trade Review readers will observe that almost the whole of our import consists

of finished and manufactured articles while our export consist totally of raw material. This clearly shows the dependence of this country for even minor articles of daily use on other countries. Pins, needles, nails, paper, pencils, etc., are all imported from abroad for our consumption. It is a disgraceful position for a big country like India to depend to this extent on foreign countries for the supply of its needs. The foreign countries benefit by this trade in raw materials with India, and the latter remains purely an agricultural country to supply these primary products to be turned into finished goods with the labour available in those countries. Their statements therefore have to be carefully investigated before being accepted. It is unfortunately true that about three-fourths population of our country is dependent today upon agriculture and their main occupation is the production of raw materials, but it does not mean that we are incompetent to bring about a change in these conditions, if it be in the interest of our country to do so. If during the last 50 years a number of other countries has successfully brought about a change in its economic condition and has industrialised, there is no reason why India cannot do the same. England's main trade consists of textile goods. She has to import cotton from India, Africa, America and Egypt. The wages in England are much higher than they are in India, still it can profitably manufacture cotton goods for Indian consumption. Twenty years back we were told that England was naturally fitted to achieve this feat of economy and having reached that high stage of industrial development it was possible for her to sell her goods cheaper in Indian markets even after defraying the transit charges of cotton to their own country and bringing it back in the form of textile goods to Indian shores. Some of us then believed this statement but within this brief period we found to our utter surprise that Japan, a small island could also perform the same feat and undersell even English goods in Indian markets. Even after the imposition of a preferential tariff by the Government of India, Japan could hold her own and it was deemed necessary to cripple her trade with India by artificial means. During the war days Government set up a Munition Board to try to manufacture articles in India for the supply of the Army. The attempt was so successful that most of the requirements could be supplied from India. It is not the place to go into the details of all those articles that were manufactured in this land within that short space but for the information of readers we refer them to the long list of articles which was placed before the Industrial Commission (Evidence Vol. V) and in which were entered articles manufactured in this country during those days. Had the war been prolonged a few years more, India would have successfully manufactured nearly all the articles for her domestic needs and could have supplied them even to England at a sufficiently cheap rate. The present economic struggle going on in this world, has forced all self-governing countries to concentrate their full attention on the development of industries and protective tariffs which are the order of the day. The old economic principle of Free Trade is no longer recognised and cherished. Even England who was the main exponent of the principle of Free Trade has been forced by circumstances to become a protectionist for the time being. Nearly all the countries in the world have once more reverted to

protection as the only means to meet the world depression and they have practically closed their doors against every country for goods which they can themselves manufacture. The cry for welfare of the consumer is no longer heard anywhere except in India. China and India are the only two countries which are considered to be open markets for the world. The former is already organising her industries and it is expected that sooner or later when normal conditions are restored she will not have to depend for the supply of her needs upon foreign countries. But in the case of India, it is not so easy unless her people once for all realise that their salvation lies only in their economic freedom and they decide to stand on their own legs.

OLD INDIA WAS AN INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY

It is useless to blame nature for our own failings. It cannot be disputed that a few centuries ago, India was a prosperous industrial country. It is not necessary to narrate here the sad history of the days of the East Indian Company and the tale of the destruction of our industries by its agents but it can very pertinently be asked why was the East Indian Company formed if not to trade in the industrial products of India? It is a fact that at that time India was producing very fine fabrics and other manufactured articles which could be sold at fabulous prices in England and other western countries. During the days of the Company the chief commodities exported from India to Europe were "Spices, pepper, drugs, sugar, coffee, raw silk, saltpetre, indigo, raw cotton and above all cotton manufactured of singular beauty and in endless variety". (Supplement to the Fourth Report on The Affairs of the E. I. Company, Appendix 47.) About the fineness of Dacca muslin Sir George Birdwood in his Acts of India (p. 259) says, "Among piece-goods the best place is given to Dacca muslin, *abarawan* or 'running water', *baft hawa*, 'woven air', *shub-nam*, 'evening dew', are plain white webs, the poetic names of which convey to the reader a true idea of their exquisite fineness and delicacy, and of the estimation in which they are held. than whole pages of literal description." About the fineness of the muslin the opinion of Tavernier, the celebrated French traveller, who visited India during the 17th century is worthy of note. He observes:—

"Mahamed Alibeg returning into Persia out of India, where he had been ambassador, presented Cha-sef the Second with a cocoanut, about the bigness of an ostrich egg, all beset with pearls; and when it was opened there was taken out of it a turban that had sixty cubits of Calicut in length to make it, the cloth being so fine that you could hardly feel it in your hand. For they will spin their thread so fine, that the eye can hardly discern it, at least it seems to be but a cobweb."

James Taylor in his sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca, published in 1840, deplures the ruin which had overtaken the muslin trade. "In the time of Jehangir, Dacca muslin could be manufactured fifteen yards long and one broad, weighing only 900 grains, the price of which was £40. Now the finest weighs 1600 grains and is worth only £10 and even such pieces are made only to order. The three pieces presented to the Prince of Wales and which were expressly prepared for him, were twenty yards long and a yard broad, and weighed 1,680 grains (three and half ounce) each." (Vide pages 249-50.) Mr.

N. N. Namerji in his monograph on "The Cotton Fabrics of Bengal" describes what the test of fineness of texture of muslin in the days of Moghul was. "One way of testing their fineness was to pass a whole piece of muslin twenty yards long by one yard wide through the small aperture of an ordinary sized finger ring. Another test was the compass within which a piece could be squeezed.....The best test was the weight of the cloth proportioned to its size and number of the threads. It is said that twenty yards long by one yard wide, could be manufactured so fine as to weigh only 900 grains. Its price was £40." The famous poet Sir Walter Scott, sings in his 'Last Minstrel' of 'Agra's silken loom'.

VII Report on The Private Trade between Europe, America and Bengal from 1st June, 1796, to 31st May, 1903, is illuminating, "Prior to the year 1799-1800, the import into Calcutta, by the native merchants, of piece-goods and raw silk, which are produced in the interior parts of the provinces, did not amount to forty lakhs of Sicca rupees, or five hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum; whereas in 1801-02 the import value of these two articles of merchandise by native merchants had actually exceeded one crore and twenty lakhs, or one million five hundred thousand pounds sterling."

Mr. Larkin writing in 1805 observes, "So extensive was the export of piece-goods in the year 1802-03, that it far exceeded the demand there was for them in London market....." (East Indian Affairs, Report on the External Commerce of Bengal for the year 1803-04; dated 18th Sept. 1805.)

This trade was not killed by the competition with the machine-made articles or by the carelessness of the Indian manufacturers or merchants but what was responsible for its total annihilation was the imposition of high import duties and making the sale of Indian goods penal. The adoption of these measures alone could turn England into a 'Free Trader'!! To enforce the 'Free Trade' upon India in its present conditions when all its industries have been so ruthlessly annihilated in a number of ways by unfair and objectionable means during the last two centuries is nothing short of adding insult to injury. Mr. Brown on The Commerce of British India in 1802-03 says: "To the most extraordinary order that perhaps was ever promulgated by our Sovereign of prohibiting the manufacture of piece-goods by the Honourable Company's native subjects, whose ancestors for many centuries had carried on a commerce most particularly advantageous to the country at large, may be attributed, in a great measure to the decrease of the exports to Great Britain, and also of the general decline of manufactures.....".

In the correspondence between the Government of India and the Court of Directors and the India Board, 1840, we find a letter addressed by Lord Ellenborough in July 1834 to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, "While the cotton manufactures of England are imported into India on payment of the duty of two and half per cent., the cotton manufactures of India are subjected to a duty on the raw material of five per cent., to an additional duty upon the manufactured article of two and a half per cent. and, finally, to another duty of two and half per cent. if the cotton should be dyed. Thus seventeen and a half per cent."

In the supplement to the 4th report Memoir on The Trade To and From India, 1795-1802, states, "At the period, when the manufacturers of this country were successful in imitating the calicoes and ordinary muslins of India, and were about to attempt the middling and the finer assortments they found that they could not by the aid of their machinery produce a fine thread giving it so much twisting as to render it harsh and wiry."

SILK GOODS

It was not the case only with cotton fabrics. None of the European countries could compete successfully with India in art, beauty and cheapness in the production of silk. Only from the middle of the 19th century the Indian foreign trade in silk fluctuated considerably on account of the trade restrictions imposed upon Indian silk by England. The importation of silk fabrics into England gave rise to considerable opposition from the British woollen and later from the silk manufactures. As early as 1700 an Act was passed by the British Legislature prohibiting the importation of Indian silk from India, Persia, China and other Asiatic countries into England.

JUTE MANUFACTURE

In the case of jute, a little more than half a century ago, the poorer people were largely clad in jute cloth of home manufacture, such as at the present day, is used by the aboriginal tribes. (Dictionary of The Economic Products, Vol. II P. 450.) In 1838 an increase export of jute cloths and bags from Bengal to England and to other parts of the world drew the attention of the linen manufacturers of Dundee to the possibility of utilising jute as a commercial fibre. So late as 1850 the exports of manufactured jute from Bengal were valued at £215,878, as compared with only £197,071 of raw jute.

OTHER MANUFACTURED ARTICLES

This was at a time when Indian fibres other than wool were unknown in England or in other parts of the world. Even England called cotton as cotton wool indicating thereby that the people of England only knew of wool as a fibre for the manufacture of cloth; in the same way the sugar cane plant was unknown outside and has been referred to as a plant producing honey by foreign travellers. But unfortunately with the change in Government, the conditions totally changed. There was no national Government to look after national interests with the result that by and by all national industries were killed and the whole population had to depend upon agriculture alone for its living. Even the people who used to go to England as mariners in ships carrying on trade between India and England were prohibited from landing in England and as a matter of fact a barrier was placed between India and the rest of the world stopping communication altogether. All sorts of reasons were invented to prove India's incapacity to be a manufacturing country and we were further told that the want of a humid climate was a bar to the growth of cotton industries. But the large number of factories working successfully in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Delhi and others, etc., where the temperature sometimes reach 117 gave a direct lie to this assertion. Only till a few years ago, Indian cotton goods were subjected to an excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in their own country which has only recently been removed.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF INDIA

India abounds in mineral resources. It produces all sorts of plants and is gifted by nature with varied climates and seasons. It is difficult to believe that a country possessing such vast resources could ever be meant by nature to be an agricultural country. There is no dearth of talent also. It has produced eminent scientists like Sir P. C. Ray, Sir J. C. Bose and Mr. Raman so well known throughout the world. A country which is rich in raw materials where scientific talent is present, where labour is cheap and markets available, cannot be said to be ill-equipped in any way for the growth of industries provided it is not denied the opportunities open to other countries. It is only through the help and patronage of the State that industries can prosper but in India the Government has always advocated a policy of non-interference which has in actual practice always meant up-holding the interests of England even if they went against those of India. The author of the "State and Industry" (a Government publication of 1928), clearly admits on page 1 of the book and says, "For Government to regulate industry was pernicious, to assist it was futile, and to participate in it was to waste public money." It may be asked, was it equally pernicious to the Government of England to regulate industry in their own country; or was it futile for that Government to assist it and was it considered a waste of public money to participate in it? If not, why then this differentiation? But the greatest misfortune is that the ignorant and the illiterate masses of India do not even now realise the full significance of this problem. They have taken to agriculture, the only profession available to the poor and the illiterate, thus adding to the number of already starving millions.

POPULATION LIVING ON AGRICULTURE

In 1881 the percentage of population living on agriculture was only 58 per cent., unfortunately no statistics before the year 1881 are available to show that the percentage then living on agriculture was lower in previous years. In 1891 this percentage went up to 61.06 per cent., in 1901 again to 66.5 per cent. and in 1921 to 71.6 per cent. The Royal Agricultural Commission on page 5 of their report, give 73.9 as percentage of people living on agriculture, i.e., within a short period of 30 years there has been an increase of 21 per cent. in the number of people living on agriculture. The pressure on land has thus gradually but steadily increased.

On the other hand in foreign countries the population living on agriculture is constantly decreasing. The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation in their final report on page 175 state as follows, "In all countries, even the most agricultural, rural population has, in the last 50 years, become a constantly smaller proportion of the whole population. In Denmark, between 1880 and 1921, it fell from 71 to 57 per cent., in France, between 1876 and 1921, from 67.6 to 53.6 per cent., in Germany, between 1875 and 1919, from 61 to 37.8 per cent.; in England and Wales, between 1871 and 1921, from 38.2 to 20.7 per cent." The above figures speak for themselves and clearly show that while in every country of the west the development of industry has consumed a very large population from rural and urban areas, in India, the agricultural population is steadily increasing. In about 1881, the

population living on agriculture in India and European countries like Denmark, France and Germany was nearly the same. It therefore certainly requires an explanation why India has taken a course different from other countries; why poor India alone has been selected to be styled an agricultural country while Denmark, France and Germany could become highly industrialised during the same period. India is certainly very rich in its mineral resources, forest and agricultural produce; there is abundance of cheap labour, there is no dearth of talent and scientific knowledge; Indian students have always distinguished themselves in foreign Universities not only in academic subjects but also in technical and scientific subjects. It cannot be argued in the face of these facts that there is something initially wrong with this country which stands in the way of its industrial development. If its disqualification lies only in the fact that it exports primary products, one can very well point out that Denmark upto only 20 years back used to do the same but during this brief period it has succeeded in turning its raw products into finished goods although they consist mostly of agricultural products.

The pressure on land on account of this wrong notion has increased to such an extent that the share of land per head is less than 2 acres and hardly sufficient to support a family. Those who advocate that by a systematic and scientific cultivation the prosperity of the cultivators will be achieved will please read the following table which we hope will convince them that countries which started with agriculture as a profession long after India had begun have a far higher area of land per head than this country has. According to Mr. L. Darling in his well known book "Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and in Debt", on pages 288 and 291, the area of average holding for different provinces is as follows:—

Provinces.					Average holding.
1. Bombay	..	..	..	..	12.15
2. N.-W. F. P.	..	..	..	..	11.22
3. Punjab	..	..	..	..	9.18
4. Central Provinces and Berar	..	..	..	..	8.18
5. Burma	..	..	..	..	5.65
6. Bengal	..	..	..	..	3.12
7. Behar and Orissa	..	..	..	..	3.09
8. Madras	..	..	..	..	4.91
9. Assam	..	..	..	..	2.96
10. U. P.	..	..	..	..	2.51

while in other countries the average holding is:—

11. Denmark	..	..	..	..	40
12. Holland	..	..	..	..	26
13. Germany	..	..	..	..	21.5
14. France	..	..	..	..	20.5
15. Belgium	..	..	..	..	14.5

According to Agricultural Journal of India for the year 1926, page 109, the size of the holding is as follows:—

One acre or less	..	..	23 per cent.
1 " 5 acres	..	..	33 per cent.
5 " 10 "	..	..	20 per cent.
over 10 "	..	..	24 per cent.

Unfortunately no satisfactory statistics are available about the average size of holdings in this country but the remark of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in this connection will be found instructive. On page 133 of the report they say, "The Punjab figures which are the only ones available for a province indicate that 22.5 per cent. of the cultivators cultivate 1 acre or less, 15 per cent. cultivate between 1 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 17.9 between $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres and 5 acres and 20.5 per cent. between 5 and 10 acres. Except for Bombay which would probably show a similar result and Burma which would give high average, all other provinces have much smaller areas per cultivator". Compare the above with the big holdings occupied in Germany, and in England and Wales.

England and Wales.

1—5 acres	..	..	..	1.1 per cent.
5—20 "	..	..	..	5.0 per cent.
20—25 "	..	..	..	9.7 per cent.
Total under 50 acres	..	..	..	15.8 per cent.
50—100 acres	..	..	..	16.0 per cent.
100—150 "	..	..	..	14.5 per cent.
150—300 "	..	..	..	29.0 per cent.
Above 300 acres	..	..	..	24.7 per cent.
Total over 50 acres	..	..	..	84.2 per cent.

Germany.

Under $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres	..	..	..	1.1 per cent.
$1\frac{1}{4}$ —5 "	..	..	..	4.3 per cent.
5 — $12\frac{1}{2}$ "	..	..	..	10.4 per cent.
$12\frac{1}{2}$ —50 "	..	..	..	32.7 per cent.
Total under 50 acres	..	..	..	48.5 per cent.
50—125 acres	..	..	..	21.4 per cent.
125—250 "	..	..	..	7.9 per cent.
250—500 "	..	..	..	4.7 per cent.
500—1250 "	..	..	..	9.4 per cent.
1250—2500 "	..	..	..	6.5 per cent.
2500 and over	..	..	..	1.6 per cent.
Total over 50 acres	..	..	..	51.5 per cent.

Both in England and Germany more than fifty per cent. holdings consist of more than fifty acres each while in India 76 per cent. of the holdings are less than 10 acres out of which 15.4 per cent. have an area of one acre or less than 1 acre. The percentage of holdings above 50 acres will hardly be one per cent.

Nobody can believe that India is unfit to industrialise itself. Japan within a short period has been able to industrialise itself and even China which is as old as India has begun to develop its industries. Even smaller countries hardly with any natural resources are able to stand their own in an industrial fight. India will not in any way lag behind if she is given a chance and opportunity to develop herself. If there is a determined will on the part of the people and Government help and patronage are forthcoming in sufficient amount, India can succeed within a very short space of time. From the perusal of the above the readers will see that India is not an agricultural country but the circumstances have made her so and she can easily change her character.

CHAPTER VII

Mode of living or profession.

From the perusal of the last pages the readers must have seen that agriculture in olden days was not a profession but a mode of living. Agriculturists of old India can neither be termed capitalists nor labourers in the present sense of the terms. They employed no labourers except at the time of some important and urgent agricultural operations and therefore it would be a misnomer to call them capitalists. Nor could they be called labourers because they did not get their living by labouring for others. They depended entirely on the produce of their fields and did not take their own labour at the farm into calculation. Both these things distinguished them from professional men of business. There is yet another equally important factor affecting their life which makes it perfectly clear that the farmers in those days did not adopt agriculture as their profession with a view to earn profit in the shape of money. It was a sort of life which they were accustomed to lead from generations and no idea of profit or loss therein even entered their mind. To them there was no market or money value of their produce as they used it mostly for getting their requirements by means of bartering. While sowing crops at the farm they were not actuated by calculations as to what crop would give them the largest yield and profits; their ideal was to produce everything that was necessary for their maintenance. They would produce a little of wheat, a little of gram, they would put in a few rows of mustard on the borders of their fields to give them oil seeds; they would grow a small quantity of cotton crop, would put in a little of sesame and a few seeds of vegetables. They would like to grow their own pulses though it may not be generally a paying crop but they would do it simply because their ideal was to produce all the crops necessary for their use. A small produce of sugar-cane would be sown in order to get sugar. They would grow their own fodder for the cattle without calculating if it would be cheaper for them to purchase fodder at a cheaper rate from their neighbour; the idea of making money out of agriculture or to grow only those crops which may give them the largest amount of profit never entered their brain. What they aimed at was to lead an independent life without serving anybody and without depending upon others for their requirements. It was on account of this mode of living that other people respected the agriculturists and it was why agriculture was looked upon as an honourable profession. Things have much changed in the meantime. Big markets and extensive commercial transactions have now been started, communications and transport have become easier and the whole world is now connected in one international market. The angle of vision of the civilised world has changed and the idea of making money and amassing wealth now predominates over that of living a life of ease and contentment. The present ideal of life is to remain dissatisfied with the present circumstances, to increase wants as much as possible and to stimulate further production to meet them. The old ideal of life was on the other hand plain

living and reduction of wants as far as possible. It is not our province to say which of these ideals is better from a humanitarian and spiritual point of view. We have simply to take the facts as they are. In olden days money was very little in use specially in the case of a farmer, but now everything is to be reckoned in the shape of money. Formerly a cultivator paid a fixed portion of the produce to the State but now he has to pay a certain amount of money as rent or revenue. The yield may be very small or the price of the commodity that he has produced may have considerably fallen or the cost of production may have gone very high still the amount of land tax either in the shape of rent or revenue remains the same and has to be paid in the form of Government coins. In the bazar the peasant cannot purchase the articles of his requirements by bartering his produce but first he has to sell his produce for money and then by means of that money alone he can purchase the articles required. Though as a member of society he lives in he has not increased his wants yet the cheap, attractive and fantastic articles exhibited for sale in cities offer him a temptation which he cannot easily resist and so he has to spend a decent portion of his hard earned money on purchase of these articles. A major portion of his produce is thus taken away from him and a very little amount is left for his needs. He is no more an independent member of society as he once used to be, who provided for the artisan, the accountant, the money-lender and the chaukidar of his village but is himself placed in an unfortunate position of dependence on all of them. The entire fabric of society is shattered.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND MODE OF LIFE

Before proceeding further it is necessary to further elucidate the difference between a business and a mode of life. If we grasp the real difference between the two, we shall be able to realise the difficulties and the actual position in which the new change has placed the farmer. To be concise a mode of life is that form of independent existence in the world which a man adopts more by instinct, habit and tradition than by any voluntary conscious action based on calculation of profit and loss. The one idea pervading such a life is to live it as best as one can without being dependent for the necessities of life on others. In this mode of life the aim is not to earn money and amass wealth with a view not only to provide oneself with the necessities of life in exchange for it but also to occupy a position of honour and influence in the society to which one belongs. An agriculturist used to follow such an independent life in olden days when he had no rent to pay in cash nor to carry his produce to the market for converting it into cash. He lived an independent life without the slightest idea of earning money and without caring as to whether the outside world was going awry or straight. A business on the other hand is not a mode of life at all; for instance, a man may be very rich and may be earning a few thousand rupees a month by running a factory or a shop still he may be living a life of a miser spending very little upon his own comfort and requirements. The income that he gets from his factory or shop does not play any part in determining the amount that he spends upon himself, or in maintaining his standard of life. In certain other cases a man may not be able to lead the life he wants to live on

account of his scanty means but in both cases it is the instinct that leads him to that particular mode of living and his profession and business have nothing to do with it. A Marwari businessman with an income of laes of rupees a year may lead a very simple life while an Englishman getting much less may lead a life of a very high standard. The aim of business is to make the largest amount of profit that one can have and for the attainment of those high profits it may not be necessary to observe even the ordinary principles of truth and morality. A businessman may not be very scrupulous about the means to obtain huge profits in business but in spite of that his mode of life may be quite simple or it may be as extravagant as that of a rich Nawab. The secret of success of a businessman is his shrewdness in making his calculations. He may become a millionaire or a pauper in the wink of an eye by his correct or wrong reading of the forces that govern the prices of commodities in the business world. He has to apprise himself of the market conditions very minutely and to keep in touch not only with the people carrying on that business but also with the forces natural, artificial, political and others which affect his trade. On the other hand a man who has to follow a certain fixed mode of living has nothing to do with the money side of the question and his only aim is to labour and labour hard in carrying on his profession and then to cut his coat according to the income that he gets.

A farmer of the old type always lived the life of a farmer by instinct and had very little to do with the external forces that bring about the rise or fall in prices of commodities. It was on very rare occasions that he had to sell his produce or to purchase articles of his domestic requirements. The price as such did not very much enter into his dealing. The only aim before him was to produce sufficient food grains and cotton so that he may get enough food and clothing and other necessities of life. He will store sufficient grain for times of scarcity or famine. In good seasons he might buy a few extra articles but on the other hand if the crop was bad he would cut down his requirements in accordance with it. The compulsory tax that he had to pay was also proportionate to his yield and being unconvertible into money did not affect him. As stated in the previous chapter if he required any thing over and above the articles produced by him he generally got them by means of barter. From generations together he was habituated to think in the terms of commodities and not in those of money but today every thing is considered in terms of money and he finds himself in a very unfortunate situation. The manipulation of prices is beyond his understanding altogether and the whole thing is perplexing to him. The only laws which he could understand were the simple laws of supply and demand restricted to his own locality. If the crop was a bumper crop he had to give more grain in exchange of articles he required to have, if the crop was a poor one the quantity of grain he had to part with was less. The other law that he could understand was that at the time of harvest the prices in the shape of grain must be low on account of the glut in the market and at the time of sowing they must go up as by that time the stock of grain was nearly exhausted. But what does he find in actual working nowadays? If he has got a very good crop the prices may be very high and if the yield is very low even then the prices may

be very low. He does not understand that the market prices do not depend on the yield of his locality only but also on the yield in the other parts of the world. He has learnt to his disadvantage that even if he stores his produce the prices may go down considerably and cause him immense loss. The whole world being connected together the prices are not controlled by the supply and demand in any particular locality but in the world in general. He does not realise that the law of supply and demand is not the only factor which controls the prices. There are other factors also which affect them, e.g., the import and export duty, currency of his own country and that of the other countries, the freight charges, etc., etc. The question of rise and fall of prices is complicated and bewildering even to a shrewd economist what to say of an illiterate farmer who has never travelled beyond a few miles from his village and is altogether ignorant of the economic forces that work the sea-saw of prices.

SECRET OF SUCCESS OF A PROFESSION

The general impression is that while success in an industrial concern requires a keen observation of the trend of prices and also a highly calculating mind farming does not require all this and can be easily adopted as a profession by anybody. Not only in India but also in other countries the inefficient farmer cannot be easily driven out. It has rightly been pointed out by "Business Man's Commission on Agriculture" on page 8 of their report, "There are many toilers on farms who if subjected to ordinary business standards, would be eliminated from the reckoning. But their test is not that of business. The relentless competition of improved methods of farming may spell their ultimate doom; but contrary to the rule of ordinary business, many if not all of them are able to continue the struggle of bare existence without quite going out." This is the position of the cultivator in the United States of America. In India the position is much worse where every artisan is being forced to join agriculture either as a labourer or as a farmer. The profit on farm thus goes on decreasing. Men of ideas and ability do not join the profession of agriculture. There are no leaders to guide and improve and the result is that the whole industry is taken up by the most incompetent people in an increasing number. The educated people or the Government officials cannot give any lead to the ignorant and illiterate farmer. So far they have played the role of advisers and they think they have done their duty when they have offered their advice to the farmer. But mere advice however good is of little avail. The farmer is shrewd enough to understand that advice by a person, however educated and high-placed, who has not put his hand to the plough cannot possess any worth. He listens to his advisers and laughs in his sleeves. What is required is to convince him of the truth of the advice is the practical demonstration. If you want that he should sow a particular variety of seed, go to his farm, show him how it is to be sown, water the crop at the proper time, put manure which is available to him and safeguard him against any contingent loss. If you succeed in demonstrating to him that your seed has been instrumental in appreciably increasing his produce not only he but his neighbours also will adopt your advice and be thankful to you. It is an admitted fact that agriculture is no more a paying profession and those who follow it do it

by instinct and not for gain. In "Politics and Land" Cecil Dampier-Whetham on page 207 of his book remarks, "Even with stable prices it is not likely that in an otherwise wealthy country like England farming will ever be profitable enough to buy men of ability, character and courage." If people of ability, character and courage cannot be found to work as farmers in England, nobody can expect such men to be farmers in India.

CONCLUSION

The result of all this is that by and by the percentage of able men in this profession goes on decreasing and it is being left entirely in the hands of those who cannot do anything else. Thus on the one hand the profession has fallen from the high ideal of a mode of life to a money-making profession and what is now deplorable even then it is left in the hands of those who are in no way qualified to run it on business lines. This is one of the greatest causes of the poverty of the peasant. The Indian farmer is altogether ill-equipped to follow agriculture as a business and as regards mode of life it neither exists nor it attracts any man of ability and high character. Ignorant and illiterate people without calculating intelligence and bent of mind have to follow the profession and they find themselves naturally incapable and handicapped on every step. A business man should be literate and should have the facilities of studying all the forces that affect his profession. A farmer has no such facilities: in the first place he still uses his old way of thinking, he inherits the same sentiment, customs and habits and the idea of profit and loss does not enter his mind. Even if it does, he is quite helpless in the matter. There is no organized effort to give him the necessary information to study the markets of the world and to calculate as to what will be profitable for him to produce.

AGRICULTURE IS NOT A PROFESSION OF CHOICE BUT IS THE OUTCOME OF FORCED CIRCUMSTANCES

Some of the readers feel that if agriculture is not a paying proposition, why should a man try to stick to it? Apparently it seems to be a very legitimate question but if one goes deep into the matter he will find that if anybody is given a chance to choose between unemployment and occupation he will prefer the latter. Out of the total population of farmers there would hardly be 2 per cent. who can read and write and there will be hardly one amongst thousands who can calculate and is in a position to enter into the question of profit and loss in raising one crop or the other. Farm accounting is a very difficult and complicated business. Even in the United States of America where the farmer is said to be very methodical in his system and where very big farms are managed by farmers real farm accounting is seldom practised. The state of affairs is much worse in India, no attempt on behalf of the people or of the Government has ever been made to enter into the details of accounting of this important profession and wherever it has been done it has been found to the surprise of many that it is a losing job. The Central Area Banking Enquiry Committee has very forcibly drawn the attention of the people in the following words, "It is plain that in quite a large number of cases it will be a paying proposition for the agriculturist to sell his land, invest the proceeds in co-operative banks and be a landless labourer on even 5 as. a day. The year for which

the income from agricultural crops has been taken in these investigations is either an average year or above the average in point of crop yield, and if this be the net return from agricultural crops in such years the position in a year of scarcity must be decidedly worse." (Page 1440.) Thus *our diagnosis of the disease is the present change and inadaptability of the farmer to it.* His main cause of poverty is that the cultivator has been forced by circumstances to follow farming as a business for which he is quite unfit. By saying all this we do not mean that a farmer is in any way extravagant or unintelligent or foolish but we want to impress upon the readers that the success in a business requires a special sort of training different to other training required to follow a mode of life. In spite of all the intelligent working of a farm and in spite of the fact that a very good crop is grown it is quite possible that simply on account of the wrong choice of the crop a cultivator may come to grief. Similarly by storing crop when he ought to have disposed it of or vice versa a farmer may be ruined. Both these calculations are very important in the case of a business while they do not find any place in a profession which is simply a mode of living. The more a cultivator is drawn away from his mode of living to the realities of a modern business life, the more he will find himself to be poor and helpless. We cannot expect the world to revert to the old days but we can help the cultivator by putting him on right lines, so that he may be able to survive.

PART III

Some Important Points Affecting Agriculture

CHAPTER I

Peculiarities of Agriculture

Mostly the people try to judge the business of agriculture by the general economic principles applicable to other industries. This is a very grave mistake as the Business Men's Commission very rightly point out. They say on page 6 of their report, "It involves a fallacy, and if acted upon must invite confusion worse confounded. Elements of business are ever present, it is true, and business methods must be observed, but the pursuit of agriculture presents other features so peculiar, indeed, so unique, that the failure to take account of them must lead to gravest miscalculation."

Again at page 17 the same sentiment is expressed, "If agriculture is to be entirely industrialized, and if success or failure is to be gauged by the material outcome alone, then the farmer as we now visualize him, may be doomed."

We propose to describe some of the main peculiarities of agricultural industry wherein it differs from other industries and business so that the readers may be able to understand complications involved in this important business. Most of the peculiarities given below are taken verbatim from either the Business Men's Commission or from the Report on Agricultural Credit. These are described so graphically and so truthfully that we feel no hesitation in quoting copiously from them.

FARMER IS BOTH A PROPRIETOR AND A LABOURER

- (1) "Farmer alone is at once a proprietor and a wage earner—a position of mixed interests that offers a stubborn challenge to both the economist's inquiries and the legislator's programme. (Business Men's Commission, page 6.)

AGRICULTURE IS SUBJECT TO GREAT HAZARDS

- (2) Agriculture is subject to peculiar and exceptionally great hazards of weather, blight, plant disease, insect pests, flood and fire. Some of these hazards may be mitigated by future scientific developments, and the worst effects of them may be mitigated by organized effort; but it is clear that at best agriculture will always have to reckon with the unforeseeable and largely uncontrollable natural conditions which are the basis of its productive processes.

Of still greater significance is the fact that agriculture is fundamentally subject to great hazards of loss due to price changes, which strike it with peculiar force. Here again some mitigation of these effects may be hoped for from organized effort, but since, after every other form of control has been applied, agricultural production is inevitably dominated by natural conditions, it will always be subject to exceptional risks. (Page 145.)

NO CORPORATE BUSINESS POSSIBLE

- (3) In corporate enterprise the mere fact of large scale production, of a number of persons being associated together in a common enterprise, combining their individual resources for the purpose of greater efficiency, and sharing the risks which are unavoidably involved creates a sense of greater security. Like travellers in an unexplored country, confidence in their success is enhanced, if they travel in an association instead of proceeding independently. (Agricultural Credit Report, page 6.)

As a producer the farmer has remained mainly dependent on his own resources, and has consequently gained few of the benefits which association in collective joint stock undertakings has given to producers and traders elsewhere. To agriculture the savings of the general community have remained inaccessible. (Agricultural Credit Committee, page 7.)

FARMER CANNOT CAPITALIZE THE FUTURE

- (4) It is not open to the farmers to 'Capitalize the future' or to borrow on 'estimated earning power', in the manner in which it is open to corporate industry; there is no commercial measure of these things in agriculture acceptable to the ordinary investor. Where, therefore, manufacture raised its capital by subscription, the farmer must realize much of his by credit. (Committee on Credit, page 8.)

FARMER DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IT COSTS AND HOW MUCH HE EARNS

- (5) To attain the highest degree of efficiency, in the use of borrowed capital, the farmer must know, as accurately as possible, two things about it—firstly, what it costs, and, secondly, what it earns.

Agriculture, technically the most difficult industry in the world, is at all times beset with risks from which most other productive industries are relatively free, and this element of risks makes the ordinary methods of forecasting earnings inapplicable to farming. In place of it, the farmer's judgment must be based on a record of past experience—a record long enough to eliminate or minimize the effect of fluctuations. Even then he cannot expect to attain in this matter the accuracy of the manufacturer or other producer in the more stable lines of business. But a costing record spread over a number of years provides a basis—indeed, the only basis—for measuring the economic use of credit, however approximate that measurement must necessarily be. (Committee of Credit, page 14.)

FARMER IS FORCED TO SELL AT AN UNFAVOURABLE TIME

- (6) There remains little doubt that financial pressure, the need of ready money to meet rent and other seasonal charges, is the chief cause impelling farmers to market their produce with undue haste. Indeed, abundant evidence has

been furnished on this point. Again and again it is reported that farmers find themselves short of ready money and are compelled to realize their produce for what it will fetch. Necessity takes the place of judgment and discrimination in selling, and the farmer only too frequently pays heavily for the unfortunate position in which circumstances have placed him. (Credit Committee, page 21.)

The farmer loses his freedom in marketing; he is often compelled to sell at a time chosen by the purchaser, who will naturally select the moment most favourable to himself, and least favourable to the farmer. With the wide fluctuations in agricultural prices, this may obviously involve a considerable loss in profit. (Credit Committee, page 34.)

FARMING A PUBLIC FUNCTION

- (7) Agriculture is not merely a way of making money by raising crops; it is not merely an industry or a business; it is essentially a public function or service performed by private individuals for the care and use of the land in the national interest, and farmers in the course of their pursuit of a living and a private profit are the custodians of the basis of the national life. Agriculture is therefore affected with a clear and unquestionable public interest, and its status is a matter of national policies, not only to conserve the natural and human resources involved in it, but to provide for the national security, promote a well-rounded prosperity, and secure social and political stability. (Business Men's Commission, page 20.)

It is equally clear that if the farmer is advised and urged in the public interest to carry his opportunities to the highest point of development, then it must be for that public, through its government or otherwise, to devise some method for his ultimate security. (Business Men's Commission, page 15.)

FARMER LOSES MOST WHEN PRICES DEPRESS AND GAINS LITTLE WHEN PRICES RISE

- (8) The spread between prices on the farm and prices at retail is very largely a labour cost and it is therefore specially unresponsive to a change in the general price level. The cost of distribution, and of manufacture as well, is relatively inflexible, and the result is that the price to the final consumer reflects but slowly changes in the primary product. In other words, the primary producer tends to benefit at the expense of intermediaries in period of rising prices, while the 'middlemen' tend to benefit at the expense of the primary producer when prices are falling.

FARMER CANNOT RESIST DEPRESSION

- (9) Agriculture offers little resistance to depression when a deflation movement is under way. Farmers are comparatively unorganized, their products are assembled from small and widely scattered producing units, and are sold

in mass on the produce exchanges, remote from the grower, for what price they will bring. The grower has comparatively little option of refusing, even temporarily the price that the market affords; once agricultural prices have definitely fallen, it is a long and hard struggle to restore them again. (Page 77.)

IMPROVEMENT MEANS MORE LOSS TO THE FARMER INEFFICIENT MAN CANNOT BE ELIMINATED

- (10) While improvements in methods to secure reduction of costs may be to the national advantage, they tend to depress the position of agriculture unless they are accompanied by the elimination of some producers or the extension of markets.

Since the industrialist can count upon a fairly quick adjustment of the number of producers to the demand, he can, when prices fall, proceed energetically to cut his costs in the confident belief that in this lies salvation. The farmer cannot reasonably have any such confidence. As an individual, he has slight opportunity for cutting his costs save by increasing production. He may, of course, eliminate waste in the production process, such as results from excessive depreciation of machinery due to lack of proper care, from improper feeding of livestock, etc., but agricultural production is basically a biological, not a mechanical, process, which requires a relatively fixed period of time, so that costs can be reduced only by increasing the production in the period and not by reducing the time required per unit of product. If the farmer increases production per acre, prices will probably fall still further. If by more intensive cultivation, he increases production per man, prices may not fall as far, but there will be a greater surplus of labour which, if demand does not increase, must be eliminated before prosperity can return. That is, of course, also true when production is increased per acre, but there is then the additional necessity of eliminating a larger acreage than would otherwise be necessary. In either case, unless there is an increase in demand, the number of producers must be reduced. The slow rate at which adjustment proceeds in agriculture may, therefore, easily bring it about that a cutting of costs by improvements in production may make the situation worse.

But such of them as tend to increase the volume of production must be linked with measures for increasing the demand for agricultural commodities or for eliminating the less efficient producers, or they are likely to prove disastrous to all farmers in the near, if not in a more remote, future.

But the inefficient producer can stay in agriculture indefinitely. The ratio of cash outlay to gross income is

normally much less in agriculture than in large scale industry, labour is the most important factor in costs, and the flexibility of payment of this labour factor is great. For these reasons agriculture attracts a residuum of inefficient men. Such men will, of course, always be poor, both in performance and in the return received. Their presence keeps prices low and makes it difficult for capable men to earn a return commensurate with their ability.

Further the relentless competition of improved methods of farming may spell their ultimate doom; but contrary to the rule of ordinary business many if not all of them are able to continue the struggle of bare existence without quite going out. (Business Men's Commission, page 8.)

FARMING IS SLOW IN MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

- (11) An important general source of the difficulties of agriculture is the peculiar slowness of the farming industry in making its economic adjustments. Agriculture is less flexible and rapid than manufacture, commerce, or finance in meeting and adapting itself to new economic conditions. Whether it is in adaptation to a new price level, to fluctuations in prices or to changes in market demands, or in the introduction of new production processes or of new forms of organization, agriculture always requires a relatively long time in the process.

One reason for this peculiarity lies in the biological character of agricultural processes, in which the demand of time is of great, almost irreducible, importance. Manufactured articles, as a rule, can be produced in a continuous working process which often requires only hours or days and seldom more than a few weeks, and by improvements in methods the required time can be cut down, in all but few industries, to a very great extent. But agricultural products can be raised only in a more or less fixed and relatively long period of time. Wheat is sown in the fall and ready for harvest not before next June, and so with other crops, while cattle and dairy cows require years before they are saleable or yield an income. The result is the slow turnover of the capital invested in agriculture (once in about seven years) already mentioned. This alone makes for slow adjustment to change in comparison with the possibilities in industry and trade, with their flexible labour forces, fluid capital resources, and quick turnover.

SELF-SUFFICIENT NATURE OF FARMING IS RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING INEFFICIENT MEN IN BUSINESS.

- (12) Of equal importance is the fact that agriculture has a peculiar power of resisting changes in its methods and forms of organization, although these changes may be prescribed by the general economic development. This resistance to change in agriculture is due to the relatively self-sufficient

character of each producing unit in the industry, a peculiarity that has continued in spite of the commercialization of farming. The farmer is practically always sure of raising at least as much as he needs for maintaining himself and his family, and this fact makes him to a very large extent independent of the existing economic conditions and enables him to defy the trend of economic development for a long period. In this respect there is a fundamental difference between agriculture and manufacture. If a manufacturing industry finds itself suffering from over-expansion and low prices or is faced with the necessity of adapting its methods to new market or labour conditions, in most cases a fairly rapid automatic adjustment is possible. In the event of over-expansion the manufacturer always has the possibility of immediately discharging his labour and shutting down his plant, and very often this course is accompanied by permanent elimination from the industry of the weaker ones among the competing enterprisers. They are forced out of business mainly through the fact that the cost of their raw materials and labour is fixed by forces beyond their control. If the selling price does not cover these costs, a failure to withdraw voluntarily is followed by bankruptcy and a forced cessation of activities in this line. The discharged labourers can no longer find employment in the over-expanded industry in which they have been working and are compelled to enter lines to which demand has shifted and which are, therefore, relatively under-developed. If they fail to find such employment, they have at least ceased to drive prices down still further on those goods which they were originally producing. Financially strong manufacturing firms will sometimes continue to produce for a certain period even at a loss, in the hope that the market will improve and in order that their organization may be kept intact for such improvement when it takes place, but this cannot be continued for long.

But in agriculture which, alone of all the great industries, is still typically conducted on the basis of a one-man or one-family producing unit, the process of adjustment is much less smooth. Except to a minor degree the farmer has no labour which he can discharge. This means that his cash outlay for labour is very small, and the same is true of his cash payments for raw materials. Thus it is possible for the farmer to continue production for a relatively long time under unsatisfactory price conditions. He even tends to increase his production in such a situation in order to make up for the low price by a greater volume of output. The farmer can nearly always guard against actual want as he grows a large part of his own food, but he cannot quit production without giving up his home as well as his place of residence, both of which changes are

seldom necessary if a manufacturing worker takes up another occupation. In addition, the farmer is somewhat inept at other activities while the city labourer can often in these days shift from one occupation to another with comparatively slight change of function. If the farmer quits agriculture in a period of depression in that industry, he further tends to lose heavily on his investment, since the depression which is the cause of his difficulties will, among other effects, have brought on a severe decline in land values.

MALADJUSTMENT OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

- (13) The more important sources of difficulty in agriculture are the maladjustment between supply and demand, the low gross return, the effects of increasing dependence of organization and management which are characteristic of the agricultural industry. The trend towards organization and collective action which has been so marked a characteristic of non-agricultural industry in the last half century, has made relatively little headway in agriculture. Among all prices those of agricultural products are the line of least resistance in a period of deflation. This is due to the inability of the farmer to stop production on the one hand and the power of organized wage earners to resist wage decreases on the other. The farmer producing the staple agricultural commodities deals as an individual both in buying and selling. On the other side are concentrated business units and though, in most cases, there is a degree of competition sufficient to prevent exploitation, such bargaining advantages as there are, are all in favour of the organized group.

SMALL SCALE OPERATIONS OF THE FARMER

- (14) The small scale of his operations makes it impossible for the farmer to do many things to which a business of large scope can easily attain. Even the most simple cost accounting is difficult for the man who does his own manual work. He, therefore, generally does not know his own costs, and competition among producers who do not know their own costs is proverbially ruinous. Further, the farmer cannot afford to do much experimenting, and the variety of soils is so great, even within a small area, that what is good on one farm may not work at all on another.

WANT OF ASSOCIATION IN AGRICULTURE

- (15) There is yet no practical equivalent in farming for the trade association. The result is that the buyers of farm products usually know more about market conditions than does the farmer, and there is slight, if any, possibility of adjustment of supply to demand except by the low process of price changes. The huge number of small producing units scattered all over the country make co-operation difficult, and producers in different sections have diverse and often contrasting interests at any given moment.

VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS

- (16) The farmer is attempting to perform a variety of functions such as now obtains in almost no other trade. The same individual is both producer and seller, and often both worker and investor. In almost all other business those functions have been differentiated. Efficient production in farming requires a high degree of intelligence and information and it is too much to ask that the producer shall also be an expert salesman and judge of market conditions, or an astute financier. The inability to perform well all these functions at the same time has been responsible for many of the difficulties of the agriculturist. Those branches of agriculture which have developed an efficient system of marketing, handled by men who give to this aspect of the work their full attention, have been relatively prosperous. But the typical farmer has remained a jack of many trades to his own great disadvantage. (B. C. p. 117.)

NO INCENTIVE FOR IMPROVEMENT

- (17) In fact, this prospect of squeezing out competitors is a strong incentive for the industrialist to improve his methods. But the farmer has always to reckon with the fact that widely adopted improvements will make the situation worse. The success of measures for reducing costs in agriculture by more efficient production depends in this way to a large extent on how generally improved methods are adopted. The greater the number of producers who do so the less is the possibility that any benefit will accrue to them therefrom, at any rate until demand has caught up with the increase in production or some producers have been eliminated. So far from receiving any benefit from widely adopted improvements in production, there is a chance not only that the whole benefit of the improvement will inure to the buyer of farm commodities, but that the farmer will even lose part of the returns which he obtained before the improvement was made. While, therefore, improvements in efficiency are incumbent upon the individual if he is to weather the storm, and while those who *initiate* improvements and keep ahead of the procession may enjoy a fair degree of prosperity, widely adopted improvements may mean for a considerable period less rather than greater prosperity. This is possibly one of the reasons why agriculture has been slow to introduce them in any large or organized way. (B. C. 121.)

THE MORE ONE PRODUCES THE LESS ONE RECEIVES

- (18) Producers immediately tend rather to increase than restrict their output in order to make up by volume of sales what they lose in price, and situation grows worse.

An especially harmful effect of deflation on agriculture is that it loads the farmer with a burden of overhead

charges out of all proportion to the prevailing price level. The turnover of capital on the typical farm is probably not faster than once in seven years. The high ratio of fixed charges to annual income which this involves becomes a crushing weight when deflation sets in. It requires as many dollars as before to pay overhead charges while the lower prices for farm products yield the farmer fewer dollars to pay them with.

FARMING IS NO MORE A SELF-SUFFICING PROFESSION

- (19) The maladjustment between supply and demand, depletion of soil resources, and the low gross return in agriculture have been made more serious in their effects by reason of the increasing dependence of the farmer upon exchange of his products and his diminishing self-sufficiency. Agriculture, like other industries, has been constantly moving towards production for a market rather than for direct consumption by the farmer. In 1820 about 86 per cent. of the gainfully occupied in America were farmers. Most of our farms were operated in the beginning on a more or less self-sufficing basis. A large part of their operation time was consumed in clearing and building up the properties and the remainder in the work of producing goods for direct consumption in the household. Farmers had but little connection with the outside maladjustment which resulted from the establishment of these numerous farmsteads. But gradually, during the past century these farms lost their self-sufficing character. Many goods formerly produced on the farm came to be made in urban factories and the farmer had more and more time for purely agricultural activities. In addition to this the practical completion of the clearing and development of the farm allowed the operators to concentrate still further on the production of crops for the market. The substitution of mechanical for animal power, as already noted, further diminished the self-sufficiency of the farm and made the farmer dependent upon the production and exchange of crops for cash.

This transaction from the self-sufficing to the commercial farm system is of great importance in the agricultural difficulties. For it was the transaction which fundamentally changed the supply and demand conditions in agriculture. As long as almost the total population consisted of farmers who led a self-sufficing existence on their farmsteads, the marketing of farm products, their prices and purchasing power in terms of other commodities were important. The shift from a self-sufficing to an exchange economy, however, has tended to maintain the over-expansion of acreage, instability of prices and the seriousness of the effects of their fluctuations. It has made more important the reduction of acreage, the conservation of soil resources by diversification and otherwise, the reduc-

tion in the number of farmers, the increase in the gross return per farmer, increased stability in price ratios, and better management and organization.

MANUFACTURER AND FARMER COMPARED

- (20) The manufacturer can discharge labour, introduce new machinery, change his product, reduce costs, or shift to other fields, not easily, but with comparative facility. The growth of corporate organization of horizontal or vertical consolidation, and trade co-operation, the development of a more generalized type of professional industrial management, and, above all, the availability of abundant liquid capital, together with the fundamental fact that in most cases industrial costs are in expression of the time involved in production and marketing, all have been combined to make the adjustment to changed conditions in manufacturing relatively easy, and to hasten the elimination of a surplus of workers or enterprises in any field. In agriculture, on the other hand, with its numerous scattered, largely unrelated establishments, its small proportion of hired labour, its relatively large fixed capital, its slow turnover, its combination of business and industry with a home and a way of life, its lack of corporate or other flexible forms of organization, the perishability of its products, and the fundamental control of its productive process by natural processes in which time is an irreducible factor, adjustment is slow and difficult. The relative facility of adjustment in manufacture is not due to superior ability in the industrialist nor altogether to organization, but to a difference in the underlying forces which dominate the respective industries and which have evolved entirely different types of producing unit. These forces have the quality of natural laws and neither the farmer nor the industrialist is responsible for them.

SELF-SUFFICIENT FARMING HAS LITTLE EFFECT ON PRICES

- (21) Under the self-sufficing economy prices did not tend to fluctuate very greatly because adjustment of the supply to the market was comparatively easy. If, owing to a good growing season, the production of any commodity was heavy, each of the producers could expand considerably his own consumption, and prices in the market did not tend to fall very far. On the other hand, in years of a short crop a slight rise in price would induce such a restriction of consumption on the farm as was necessary to bring out a supply sufficient to prevent a further rise in price. In either case the farmer was less affected by a given price change than he would be today, since he had little of any one crop for sale. Further, weather conditions peculiarly favourable or unfavourable to some crops and not to others, which today may be of vital importance to whole regions, were a factor of minor significance when diver-

sification was more general. The opening up of semi-arid regions to crop production has also led to greater fluctuations in yield and in price. The consequence of all this is a very wide range of price fluctuations which make for large profits in some years and heavy losses in others. (B. C. 110.)

INSURANCE IMPOSSIBLE

- (22) Moreover, in agriculture, the element of risk is less easily measurable than in other industries, and agriculture in consequence is under a disability in comparison with the more stable lines of production.

Insurance against weather calamities is hardly possible. On account of the great risks involved in the profession itself the premium that has to be paid to secure insurance is generally prohibitive than investing money in insurance companies. (Agricultural Credit Report, page 36.)

AGRICULTURE DOES NOT ATTRACT BEST BRAINS

- (23) Only those communities are likely to prosper who have the best brains of the country behind them. But unfortunately not only in this unfortunate country but also in all the countries of the world the best brains cannot be purchased by an industry like agriculture. An industry which has no temptations for a life of ease and luxury, an industry which has no society of educated people and last but not least an industry though it had attraction sometime back for independent life but which now is an industry which mostly depends for its success or failure on outside forces, cannot hope to provide a temptation to really capable men to join. The result is that in all the foreign countries there is a flow of the best men going out of the industry in other pursuits. In India, though the total population living on land is daily increasing, being thrown out of employment, still every educated man, or intelligent man leaves the rural area and decides to go to towns and try to take to some pursuits other than agriculture. The result is that the industry is left in the hands of less and less efficient people every day.

CHAPTER II

Forces affecting agriculture.

After narrating the specialities of agriculture as distinguished from an industry or a manufacture, it seems to be necessary to discuss forces that affect it so that it may be possible for us to discuss in details the remedies that are likely to be useful to alleviate the misery of cultivators. After the Great War a number of countries appointed commissions and committees to enquire into the methods for effecting improvements in agriculture. During the war every country, that took part in it, realised that the success or failure in the war depended upon the sufficiency or otherwise of the sources of supply of raw materials specially those required for maintaining human life. They felt that in a long drawn battle, only those countries were likely to survive which independently of other countries, could maintain themselves for the longest period. Food is essential for human existence and agriculture being its source, the attention of all nations was naturally drawn to the industry which produced food. They made enquiries as to how this important industry could be placed on a sound basis. In spite of the fact that the farmers of those countries were in a much better position and were far better equipped than the Indian farmers, they came to the conclusion that the income of a farmer was far less than that of other labourers possessing equal capacity, intelligence and education. Their unanimous conclusion was that agriculture was the least paying industry in comparison to other industries. The result was that there was a regular flow of intelligent and capable people from agriculture to other industries and there was a decrease in rural population. These facts were enough to startle both the economists and the politicians and therefore they decided to make a thorough survey of the situation in order to remedy the evil and put agriculture on a sounder position and to make it more attractive. We shall discuss in detail at some other place the remedies suggested by these commissions but during their investigations they found a number of factors which went to affect the efficiency of this industry. The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation submitted the final report to the Parliament of England in 1924 and out of a number of forces contributing to the well-being of agricultural industry, they singled out those which they deemed sufficiently important. They were not peculiar to England alone and as pointed out in the report itself are equally important to any other country of the world. It may therefore be worth while to go into the detailed working of these forces in our own country. By a detailed discussion of these forces we hope to make it clear that the farmers are not the makers of their own fortune and a number of forces beyond their control are at work which affect their income in various ways.

They observed in the report on Page 36:—

“The study of foreign system of agriculture shows that a large

number of forces contribute to the well-being of the agricultural industry in any country. The factors which we single out as sufficiently important for special mention are:—

- A. The system of land tenure (including the provision of small holdings).
- B. The fiscal organisation of the country and in particular the assistance to agriculture by tariffs or subsidies.
- C. The system of general education and the special provision for agricultural education and research.
- D. The economic organisation of the industry and in particular the development among farmers of co-operative methods of purchase and sale, co-operative credit and co-operative insurance.
- E. The institution of schemes for the improvement of livestock and crops, the standardisation of produce and the control of weeds and vermin.
- F. The organisation of transport, the provision of power and wireless, the assistance of subsidiary rural industries and the development of afforestation.
- G. The development of State or voluntary organisation to provide the necessary central and local machinery for carrying out the various measures of agricultural policy.

We take each factor seriatim and discuss its importance in connection with our own country.

(i) System of land tenure.

LAND A NATIONAL ASSET

The system of land tenure has been deemed to be of primary importance. Land is a national asset and the prosperity of a nation depends on the use that the nation makes of this free gift of nature. It is therefore of primary importance for a country's prosperity to evolve the best system by which land may be partitioned out to different individuals to make the best use of it. If once it is conceded that land is a national asset, and there seems to be no doubt why it should not be so admitted, it at once becomes the duty of a nation to devise such means and methods by which the largest amount of wealth may be produced from this source of natural supply. The report referred to above, has very rightly remarked on page 10, "Mineral is exhausted as it is extracted. The wealth of the soil when rightly developed is inexhaustible and to a certain degree progressive in character." Land being a source of inexhaustible supply of raw materials and agriculture being the art of producing raw materials from the soil for the use of various industries, it is the primary duty of every country to make the best of the land. The land tenure system should be devised in such a way that the agriculturist may feel sure that a sufficient portion of the produce got from the soil is left to him. If the cultivator has to part with whatever he gets from the soil by his labour, either in the form of taxes or of rent or in some other form there will be no incentive left for him to work. The first and the foremost aim

of every well-wisher of his country should therefore be that the farmer who toils and works at the farm gets a sufficient return for his labour. The nation which disregards this first principle of providing enough for those who produce food and clothing for the nation can never hope to prosper.

The first thing that is necessary to give impetus to produce more from a plot of land is the principle of security against ejection. The cultivator should feel interested in the land he occupies. The ideal stage would be where a cultivator has a perfect security against disturbance and at the same time the nation has a perfect right to eliminate the cultivator who neglects to perform his duties. In the golden days as we have pointed out in another place, the land belonged to the village community and it was the right of the village community to allot the land amongst its members. They were perfectly at liberty to take good land from an inefficient worker and give it to another member who could get more out of it. It was also their privilege to increase the amount of land apportioned to members in accordance with their family requirements. The idea that the land belongs to the community and should be worked up in the interest of the community was uppermost and the idea of ownership did not find a place in the land tenure system in those days. There was no right of occupancy nor the right of ejection invested in any individual and, if it at all existed, it vested in the village community. The sovereign had no right to interfere in the management of the land, and he was simply concerned with a portion of the produce. He guaranteed a sort of protection from outside attack and in lieu of this service he was given a portion of the produce. It did not matter if this produce was collected through the headman of the community or without consultation of the village community.

KING IS NOT THE OWNER OF LAND

According to the Hindu conception of ownership, even a king was not the owner of the land. The great philosopher Jaimini (6-7-3) states, "Na Bhumiḥ syat sarvaṃ pratyā vishishtatvat". The land is not a subject of gift by the king, for as regards its proprietorship all men stand in the same position."

Commenting on this, Savara Swami observes:—

The kind of possession whereby the king exercises his control over the earth, other people also do likewise; there is no difference so far as that goes. Being the king this alone is his special privilege, that because he protects paddy and other things, which grow on the land, he is owner of a reasonable proportion of the produce but he does not own the land. Sayana, commenting on the text of Taitirīya Brahmana states, "The king should perform the sacrifice giving away of his property." (1-4-7-7) He further says, "The land is not the property of the king,—the land of the country cannot be given away." Poet Kalidass has put the same idea in beautiful language, he says, "He (the king) took the valī or land-tax from the peasantry, only to spend it for the good of the peasantry, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the soil, only to return it a thousand fold".

SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE IN INDIA

Under the British rule land was for the first time farmed out by public auction. The zemindar was recognised as the owner of the land. When Bengal came under the British rule, the worst sort of zemindari system was introduced in that province. Intermediaries, sometimes to the extent of 24 between the zemindar and the cultivator are to be found there. Each of the intermediaries has one or another right in land. The man who actually cultivates the soil is far removed from its so-called owner. In Oudh the entire land was first settled with the ryots cultivating it but unfortunately, the zemindari system was introduced after a very short period and sanads were granted to the taluqdars. It is not our province to go into the history of the land tenure system in this country but we can at once say without fear of contradiction that the old system of land tenure does not exist any longer in this country. The whole land tenure system can be divided generally speaking into two, the zemindari system and the ryotwari system. The main difference between the two systems is that while in the former system, the ownership of the land vests in the zemindar, in the latter it vests in the Government. Of course the rights conferred upon the ryot by the patta granted by the Government can be sold just as the rights of zemindari are sold away under the zemindari system. The land, granted to a zemindar, is not cultivated by him but is generally given to cultivators on rent. No doubt some of the zemindars do follow the profession of agriculture but the area under their cultivation is very small and even where petty zemindars exist, the land is rapidly passing from the hands of real cultivating zemindar to the non-cultivating money-lender, whereby the zemindar becomes merely a tenant with certain rights in the land. Statistics are not available to show what percentage the area cultivated by the owner of the land bears to that held by the non-zemindar cultivators. Out of the total cultivated area of 2,90,29,907 acres only 58,29,463 acres are held in sir and khudkasht in the United Provinces and out of the total area of 98,66,771 acres only 11,35,394 acres are held as sir and khudkasht in Oudh and we know very well that even a large portion of sir is held by sub-tenants. The position in the ryotwari system is in no way better. A very large area is leased or sub-leased to the cultivator and the actual cultivator is not necessarily the ryot to whom the patta is granted. There are very big pattadars having no cultivation of their own and all their land is let out on rent to others, but even then the area in possession of the pattadars, is much more than the area actually cultivated by the zemindars under the zemindari system. In both cases the actual cultivator is not the owner or the proprietor of the land he cultivates. Though by recognising the right of the ryot the Government has conferred certain rights of occupancy and has provided safeguards against ejection yet the percentage of such secured cultivators is very small. The security of undisturbed enjoyment of land is hardly available to less than 50 per cent. of the cultivators.

PRESENT RENT IS NOT ECONOMIC

The actual cultivator pays rent either to the pattadar or to the zemindar. This rent unfortunately is not an economic rent as some

of the readers may be disposed to think. We have stated elsewhere that there is more demand for land than is available and naturally the zemindar or the pattadar puts one tenant against another and tries to increase the rent to the largest limit possible. He can go on following this process of rack-renting without any restriction. The revenues of the Government being a proportion of the rent that the zemindar realises, the Government enjoys the fun and at every settlement increases its own revenue based upon this system of rack-renting followed by the zemindars continuously for 30 years. The poor man who labours and labours hard has to pay the penalty of selecting farming as his profession and neither the zemindar pities him nor the Government protects him. As far back as 1880, the Famine Commission in their report, para 119, pointed out the importance of regulating the rent and recommended that the rent should only increase proportionately to the revenue fixed on land at the time of settlement. They observed: "We are of opinion that most of these evils could be avoided by reverting to the original principle under which the rent of privileged tenants could be altered only at the same time as the revenues had to be fixed periodically by the same officer who fixed the revenue; so that it should be the duty of the settlement officer to assess the rent field by field (following the practice in Southern India), and there to base his assessment of the revenue of a fixed proportion of the rent roll. We recommend that this principle should be submitted to Government by different provinces concerned. (If they consider that it would not be unfair to the landlords we are of opinion that it would be advantageous to the general well-being of the country, and should be extended to all classes of occupancy tenants however their rights may have been acquired.) If this principle were adopted the rule in Bengal should perhaps be that a revision of rents should not take place oftener than every 30 years although no revision of the Land revenue is to follow upon it." But the Government did not accept this recommendation perhaps in order to avoid the odium of increasing the rent and revenue at every settlement. The existing position of the tenant is simply pathetic as regards the rent of land he cultivates.

DEFECTS OF THE ZEMINDARI SYSTEM

The following are some of the main defects of the system in which the cultivator is not the proprietor of the land:

1. The cultivator has no attachment to the land and does not feel any interest in making improvement as he is always afraid of being ejected or the rent being increased even in disproportion to the increase in his income. Every improvement made at the expense of the cultivator himself, gives an increased rate of rent to the zemindar who in no way helps or contributes towards the improvement. Cases are not rare where the cultivator has been prohibited or brought into court of law simply because he tried to dig a well or improve his holding in one form or another.

The cultivator is always at the mercy of the zemindar and much more so when the latter happens to be the sole owner of the village or very influential in the

locality. This dependence of the cultivator demoralises him and he cannot work as a free-man.

3. The zemindar employs all means, fair and foul, to increase the rate of rent. He has no regard for the well-fare of the man who fills his coffers. In order to get the largest benefit out of his estate, the zemindar follows with impunity the divide and rule policy and creates factions and parties in the village to strike at the very root of corporate and democratic life in the village.
4. The cultivator has to pay a very large portion of his income to the zemindar and remains always poor.
5. The system produces and encourages a class of people who depend entirely for their income upon others without having any interest in the land or the estate they possess. It creates people who are nothing more than parasites in society. The greatest danger to society from such people is their influence and abuse of power to tyrannise over their people. Generally people living on income for which they have not to exert themselves pass their lives in luxurious pursuits, generally detrimental to society and the country they live in.
6. It creates two classes of people who are always at war with one another. This bad blood and animosity brings about a state of affairs in which the people have to devote all their time and energy in intrigues and litigation against each other. As long as the influence of the zemindar continues, the cultivator is subjected to all sorts of tyranny and high-handedness. As soon as his influence is weakened, the cultivator takes his chance to ruin him. This struggle for getting an upperhand goes on for ever till both are exhausted.
7. The cultivator has no property to get credit on and this forces him to borrow at a very high rate of interest which the industry cannot bear.
8. The idea of superiority enters into the brains of the zemindar and he feels it derogatory to work the plough himself with the result that his cultivation is done by his servants thus setting a bad example to his cultivators.
9. When there is famine or scarcity, the zemindar is always opposed to the remission of revenue as it proportionately reduces the rent thereby decreasing the profit of the zemindar to that extent. From a Government point of view it may be a happy state of affairs as it is not in the interest of the zemindar to recognize a famine even when the crop has entirely failed.
10. Whenever there is a settlement after every 30 years, the revenue is increased and along with it, the zemindar is allowed to increase the rent sometimes in proportion and sometimes even more than the increase in revenue.

11. The main function of the State, in fixing rent or revenue ought to be based on an enquiry as to the net-income of the cultivator from agriculture but unfortunately under the zemindari system no such calculation is made by the zemindar or by the Government. Competitive or un-economic rent is generally considered to be reasonable—a very dangerous state of affairs for the economic interests of the cultivator.
12. Under this system, the cultivator gets no money to improve his land while the zemindar never cares to study scientifically the methods for the improvement of his land.

ACTION TAKEN BY OTHER COUNTRIES TO CREATE PEASANT PROPRIETORS

It was long ago that these difficulties were realized in other parts of the world and they came to the conclusion that ownership in land gives a feeling of security and sense of attachment and interest therein which nothing else can do. They found out that it is the most satisfactory basis for credit either through cooperative societies or by private arrangement. In most of the countries of Europe, the Government provides facilities to acquire land from the zemindars and to provide money for this purpose on long term instalment system carrying a very low rate of interest generally not exceeding 3 per cent. to be paid back in 30 or 60 years. The history of Denmark is very instructive and useful in this respect. Many competent observers in Denmark regard the system of ownership as the most important cause of Danish prosperity. In 1850, the non-proprietor cultivators were 42.5 per cent., in 1905, this percentage was decreased and was brought down as low as 10 per cent. At present about 92 per cent. of the cultivators are the proprietors of the land they cultivate. Compare this state of affairs with the Punjab where in 1911 the number of people living on the income from land was 6,26,000 which increased to 10,08,000 in 1921. We have quoted figures for the Punjab inasmuch as on account of the Punjab Alienation Act working, land cannot be alienated to non-agriculturist tribes. Obviously the other provinces are much worse.

In England itself between the years 1908-14 the Small Holdings Act gave an impetus to the acquisition of ownership in land. As early as 1848 there had arisen a strong political party of "Peasants' Friends," who pressed for a measure for compulsory sales by the manorial lords of their ancient rights. On the other side a land owners' society came forward to meet the agitation by promoting voluntary sales themselves. Finally, in 1861, a measure was passed which as it turned out, effected the desired object by giving a substantial motive to landlords to dispose of their rights, but at the same time without surrendering to them either so large a monetary compensation as would cripple the new owners by heavy redemption payments, or transferring to them anything like so large a proportion of the land as in Prussia. This law remained in operation to the end of 1899; but, long before that time, it had done its work. In accordance with its provisions, between the years 1861

and 1890 most of the remaining tenancies had become peasant properties. The significant Legislative measure of 1899 returned to the traditional Danish Policy of actually multiplying owners. Under an act of that year the State lent to applicants nine-tenths of the total cost of the holding (including building and stock). The new holdings were limited in size and value. The terms of repayment were easy: they were subsequently amended and interest was to be charged for the first five years only, and that too at the rate of 3 per cent., and after that an additional payment of 2 per cent. was to be made to the sinking fund until the loan was paid off. By an Act of 1906 Government loans were made available to Public Utility Companies which bought large properties for the purposes of carving them up into small farms. The farms thus created are free-hold, and when the loan is paid off will become the absolute property of their occupiers. They can be sold but they cannot be subdivided. Laws of 1919 were designed to put more land at the disposal of the State for the formation of small holdings.

Almost in all the foreign countries, the first principle recognized for the development of agriculture has been a creation of peasant proprietors and to provide means at very cheap rates for acquiring land from their landlords. Even in Industrial Germany attempts were made to secure ownership in land by the cultivators, as it was done in England and Scotland. It is therefore clear that it is necessary for every country which wants to see its agriculture developed to introduce the system of peasant proprietorship in the land and unless this is secured the position of the cultivator is not likely to improve.

In addition to this, a defective land-tenure system also stands in the way of agricultural development. When succession or inheritance opens out, it always creates a new chance for litigation. The laws of tenancy and of land tenure should be quite simple so that they may be easily understood without the intervention of expensive lawyers or judiciary. A public servant like the patwari should be a servant of the public in the real sense of the term and on no account should he be allowed to play so important a role in the decision of such matters as he is allowed at present with a consequent danger of corruption and abuse. In an illiterate and poor country like India every attempt should be made to see that the system does not entail any hardship or expense upon the tillers of the soil. Evidence as to the genealogy of cultivators should be maintained in the revenue records, and it may be available when a new question of inheritance opens. The laws on the question of transfer and inheritance should be made easily understandable and all laws of the country should be available in the language of the people.

CHAPTER III

The fiscal organisation of country and in particular, the assistance to agriculture by means of tariffs and subsidies.

FACTORS AFFECTING PRICES

CURRENCY

It is the general belief that the prices of agricultural commodities are the natural result of the principle of demand and supply either in the locality or in the world at large. Transport facilities and the methods of communication control the movement of goods from one country to another and the freight charges payable constitute an important consideration in the export and import of the different countries and the determination of the prices of such commodities. Ordinarily this is true but in practice there is a number of other forces outside the principle of demand and supply which goes a long way in controlling prices. In England only recently a committee was appointed for stabilisation of agricultural prices. They enquired into all the various factors on which the prices of agricultural commodities depend. They quoted the opinions of economists with approval and we take the liberty of quoting some of them as under. Hume, a famous economist says, "It is the proportion between the circulating money and the commodities in the market which determines prices." Ricardo, another economist pointed out that, "Commodities rise and fall in price in proportion to the increase or diminution of money, I assure as a fact that is incontrovertible." Similarly, John Stuart Mill, another famous writer on economics has expressed his view in the following words, "An increase of the quantity of money raises prices and a diminution lowers them, is the most elementary proposition in theory of currency and without it we should have no key to any others." Before the House of Lords Committees of 1837 a large farmer and miller, Mr. John Lewin said, "We have always had better prices where the currency has been expanded and when it is contracted they are lower. I have watched for 20 years the bank circulation, the issue of the country's notes expands and contracts with it. When the Bank of England has increased its issues our prices have gone up; when they have contracted, our prices have gone down." The report adverted to above after giving the above quotations confirms that "the purchasing power of money have been responsible for greater misfortunes to agriculture than has arisen from any other single cause."

This is the settled opinion of experts who enquired into the causes that go to control the prices of agricultural commodities. The same has been the view of all traders and commercial men in India. They have been crying hoarse during the last few years against the artificial control of currency; the method which the Government has adopted in order to maintain the artificial price of the rupee. During a period of 5 years from 1926 to 1930 there has been a contraction of money in circulation to the extent of Rs. 9,967 lacs. When Government of a

country manages to pack the money in circulation to their own treasury it is not possible to get good prices for agricultural articles. India is an exporting country of primary products and as such it is in the interest of all the foreign countries that the prices are kept low which is easily effected by the contraction of currency. Those who have studied the rise and fall of prices in connection with expansion and contraction of currency, know perfectly well that the agriculturist, for no fault of his own by this simple device, had to lose crores of rupees during the last few years. In a self-governing country, no Government would have been allowed to persist in such an objectionable practice for long. We perfectly remember that only recently when the Government of England was forced in the interest of their country to declare its currency off the gold the rupee was unjustly linked to the sterling resulting in an artificial rise in prices of the agricultural products by the expansion of the currency in India. India has no control over its fiscal policy and it has never been determined in accordance with the interest of the country. Entire commercial community's unanimous voice wanted a reserved bank to be established to control the policy of exchange and currency but the Government did not pay heed to this important demand. Even when the Reserve Bank Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 1929, the Government persisted that no politician should be allowed a seat on the directorate of the bank. The Government withdrew the bill and did not introduce it again. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee has also pointedly referred to the importance of the establishment of a reserved bank at an early date but nothing has so far been done nor it is likely that the Government of England will easily allow the Indians to have control over this important subject. The discussion of the fiscal safeguards at the 2nd Round Table Conference in England is a clear indication of the way the wind is blowing.

EXCHANGE

Equally important is the question of exchange. Gold is the main medium of exchange throughout the world and there is hardly any country worth the name which has not a gold coin, for circulation in their country and for an automatic exchange value of converting the coin of one country into the coin of another country. If there is a gold coin in circulation no artificial method is required to control the exchange value of a coin but India has been very unfortunate in this respect also. The Government always promised to introduce a gold coin into this country but never gave effect to it permanently. We know under what circumstances the gold coin once introduced was withdrawn from circulation. Under one pretext or another India is deprived of this important measure and an artificial price of gold is tried to be maintained. If it is the intention of the Government of India that there should not be any gold coin introduced in this country then the price of exchange should be based on the prices of silver in comparison to the price of gold. Even that too is not allowed to be done. By an Act of Legislature or by an order of the Government of India the exchange value of the rupee is fixed. It is always tried by those in power to maintain the price of rupee at the highest possible rate. All the financial resources of the country are frittered away in

order to maintain this artificial ratio. It will be in the memory of educated Indians that recently in spite of the opposition of practically all the elected members of the Legislative Assembly the Government forced the ratio of 1s. 6d. for a rupee while the whole country wanted it to be placed at 1s. 4d. In this way the agriculturists are forced to sell their articles much cheaper. Recently when Great Britain declared her own coin to be inconvertible in gold, rupee was not allowed to find its own level as in that case, the goods of England could not be cheaply imported into this country. The exchange value for pound remains Rs. 13, 3 as., and all goods imported from England are paid at that rate while India has to pay Rs. 20 for every gold pound for goods imported from countries other than England. Thus India is forced to pay about 6 rupees more for all non-British goods. This would not have happened had the rupee not been pegged to the pound. Similarly the prices of agricultural commodities get less from foreign countries other than England on this exchange basis. India has to sell goods worth Rs. 20 to every foreign country to get a pound in exchange while Rs. 13, 4 as. only worth of goods need be exported to England to pay the same price. Thus India is handicapped at every step in the price of her agricultural commodities, resulting in a heavy fall in prices and consequent loss to the cultivator.

BANK RATE

There is yet a third method, as effective as any of the two methods given above and it is the bank rate. We have stated elsewhere that the bank rate in this country does not fall beyond Rs. 5 while in other countries it is allowed to go down normally to 3 per cent. Only recently England brought down the bank rate to a very low pitch by artificial means so that sufficient money for trade, commerce and industry may be available on easy terms. It is said that the bank rate announced did not reach such a low level during the last twenty years. One can very pertinently ask, has England become so rich all of a sudden that she is able to lower down its bank rate within a very short period? Has she paid off all her debts to foreign countries? Or has she secured money by some other means during this brief interval? All such manipulatory devices are practised by those who have the good of their country at heart. It is a well-known fact that even in days when money is abundant and easily available in India at 3 per cent., the Government of India forces banks to keep their rates high. If the bank rate is allowed to go down, the rate of interest at which money is made available to the agriculturists will also be lower. Those who in season and out of season accuse the money-lender of charging high rates of interest do not realise the manifest injustice done by the Government in keeping the bank rate high and thus indirectly forcing the cultivator to pay a high rate of interest.

GOVERNMENT BORROWINGS

There is yet another important reason which affects adversely the prices of agricultural commodities. The Government borrows money at a very high rate of interest and thus all the savings of the country flow into Government treasury and are neither used for new industries nor for agricultural improvements. At the time of floating loans more currency is not made available nor is it considered advisable, that loans

may not be floated at the harvest time when money is required in abundance to make payments by the cultivator. At such an important time if money is drawn from circulation in the shape of Government loan and the rate of interest is thus artificially raised the result is that the prices of agricultural produce fall considerably lower than what they would have been had they been allowed to follow their natural course.

DEMAND FOR CURRENCY

There is yet a fifth cause, though it is covered in the fourth to some extent that the demand for money in this country does not always remain the same and changes with the marketing conditions. At the time of harvest the demand for currency is the highest but after the harvest it is very small. In order to maintain normal conditions currency should also expand at the time of harvest while it should contract afterwards when the demand has fallen. No such rule is observed and the result is that the agriculturist suffers a great deal by selling his harvest at a low price.

BOUNTIES OR SUBSIDIES

We are not concerned here with the details of this complicated question but it so naturally affects the question of the development of the farmer that we cannot help dilating upon it. The readers will see that these forces affect not only the poverty of the agriculturist but even the finances of the big commercial magnates who find themselves helpless in the matter. Besides these monetary questions, tariffs and subsidies are equally important means for helping industries. Whenever it is desired that a certain article—a primary product—be produced in a country, it has always been found a *useful method* to help the grower by giving him substantial grants so as to cover the losses in the new venture. It must be well known to the readers that Germany started the system of giving large bounties to her own manufacturers of beet-sugar and thereby she succeeded in flooding the markets of other countries. Indian Sugar Industry was almost killed by the bounty fed sugar imported from other countries. Fortunately this system came to an end very soon and it could not be tried in the case of other commodities on such a large scale. Recently the Government of England by the help of subsidy encouraged sugar production in England. It need not be stated that on account of the climate and other circumstances in the present state of our knowledge it does not seem possible that England will be able in the near future to produce sugar sufficient for herself but still Englishmen realise that the production of sugar, at least for their own consumption, is necessary and should be attempted, no matter how much it costs the taxpayer to do so. The Government of Great Britain enacted Sugar Subsidies Act in 1924 by which every producer of sugar or molasses was entitled to a large subsidy. According to it, a sugar manufacturer was allowed subsidies varying from 19s. 6d. to 9s. 8d. per cwt. if it was manufactured from 13th September 1924 to 1st October 1928 and to subsidies varying from 13s. to 6s. 5d. per cwt. if it was manufactured from 13th September 1924 to 1st October 1931 and to subsidies varying from 6s. 6d. to 3s. 2d.; if it was manufactured from 30th September 1931 to 1st October 1934. Calculated in Indian weights and measures the highest amount of money that a

manufacturer was entitled to for the first four years amounted to about Rs. 9 a maund on white sugar and Rs. 4 a maund on low quality sugar. Any Indian sugar manufacturer would have successfully competed on such terms with his opponents, the manufacturers of Java sugar, similarly a subsidy varying from 12s. 4d. to 1s. 5d. per cwt. for low grade sugar molasses was announced. The readers can very well visualise the effect on industry if helped to such an extent by the Government. Similar was the action taken by the Government of Japan in granting subsidy to sugar manufacturers. The author of "Industry and Trade of Japan" on page 184 of his book says, "Progress in sugar is mainly due to the Government's encouragement and the subsidies which undoubtedly were the cause of the development of the industry. As mentioned elsewhere the Government introduced the sugar tariff in 1902 and the sugar subsidy Act of Formosa which was made law in June of the same year set down detailed rules with regard to the grant of subsidies and Government aid to the industry. The main heads of the Act were:—Subject to the provisions of the Act, the Government will give a bounty to a person or persons engaged in sugarcane cultivation and raw sugar production in respect of—

1. Cost of young canes.
2. " " " manure.
3. " " " cultivation.
4. " " " machinery and implements of sugar manufacturing.

The Act was altered in 1922 when the bounty on rock sugar was abolished and that on plantation of young canes was replaced by the free supply of such cane subject to the provisions of the Act. The main clauses of the present sugar subsidy Act may be summarised as follows:—

1. The Government shall supply young canes free of charge to a person or persons undertaking the industry with modern machinery and owning their own cane-farms.
2. Five-tenths of the cost of work of drainage and irrigation on cane farms shall be subsidized and machinery and implements which are necessary in regard to the work may be loaned or given according to the circumstances of the case and the total subsidies shall not exceed 15,000 a year.
3. Sugar manufacturing machinery and implements which belong to the Government may be lent to any one whom the Government deems suitable.

Present rates of sugar tariff on import of sugar

Rate of duty per 100 Kin (Yen)

Under 11	Dutch standard	.. ..	2.5	(Yen)
" 15	" "	.. ..	3.10	"
" 18	" "	.. ..	3.35	"
" 21	" "	.. ..	4.25	"
" other	" "	.. ..	4.65	"
Rock candy sugar, cube sugar, loaf sugar and similar sugar molasses				7.40 "

- (a) Containing not more than 6 per cent.
by weight of sugar calculated as
sugarcane 1.30 ..
- (b) Other 2.50 ..

The Indian agriculturist has never been granted a subsidy to encourage the manufacture of any agricultural article so far as we know. Even when the Government realised the custom duty of crores of rupees on sugar they did not find their way to spend even a small portion of it for the encouragement of this important industry.

TARIFFS

Tariff is yet another method by which agriculture can be helped. England has always tried to show herself to be a believer in free trade and has taught the same lesson in India. The student of economics very well know that the time when the idea of free trade was advertised, England had turned herself into an industrial country and had put her industries on a sound competitive basis. The patriotism amongst Englishmen to patronise articles made in their own country together with the leading position that it had acquired in the manufacture of different articles was a sufficient protection against competition. England being an Island country was in need of importing food to feed her own population and raw materials for factories and was further in need of finding out an outlet for the sale of her finished goods. It was in her interest to preach free trade to the world at large so that it might be able to capture the markets of other countries. Some people believe that it was not due to any regard for the justice and truth of a principle that she adopted free trade as a national policy for her country. If really England believed in the justice of open door policy why did she find it necessary to seek protection against competition from India. The policy of high tariff walls and taking shelter behind Legislative measures in prohibiting Indian goods from being imported into the country seems to be sufficient proof of the fact that free trade policy was adopted only in her own interest and not as an economic creed. It may be said that those were the days of the East India Company when trade and commerce were not based on sound economic principles but even today the Government of England has adopted the same lines and has turned a protectionist country by raising tariff walls against the import of foreign goods.

Tariff has been used as a very important factor in maintaining agricultural population on land in Germany. The following account taken from the "Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation" will clearly show that duties levied in Germany defended the German farmer from competition and saved him from ruin.

"Germany in 1879 reverted to protection after a brief interval of almost complete free trade. On the agricultural side this was due not only to the growing danger of competition in the home market from other lands, but also to the loss of their European market for grain by the great landowners of the Eastern Provinces, who had hitherto found free trade to harmonise with their pecuniary interests. As the main bread corn of the German people was rye, and the acreage under rye was some three times as great as the acreage under wheat, Russian rye

was felt to be even more of a danger than American wheat. The duties, however, imposed in 1879 were quite low. It was not till 1884, after the fall in grain prices owing to imports had become more alarming, that they were made substantial. They were again raised in 1887; and remained on that level till February 1892. The particulars, so far as grain is concerned, were as follows:—

		Duty per Metric ton in marks.			
		Wheat.	Rye.	Barley.	Oats.
Oct. 1, 1879—June 30, 1885	..	10	10	5	10
July 1, 1885—Nov. 25, 1887	..	30	30	15	15
Nov. 26, 1887—Jan. 31, 1892	..	50	50	50	40

The equivalents in shillings per quarter in case of wheat were:—

1879	..	..	..	2	2
1885	..	..	..	6	6½
1888	..	..	..	10	10½
1892	..	..	..	7	7½

Under the tariff of 1906 the duty was increased to an equivalent of 11s. 10d."

The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation itself stated in their report on page 49 the use of tariff in case of Germany in the following words:—

"The upshot of the whole matter, however, is that Germany managed with the help of its tariff without asserting of course that tariffs were the only cause—not only to maintain its agriculture unimpaired, but to strengthen it in its productive capacity". Further on they admit, "It is unmistakably clear that Germany did succeed in keeping its peasant on the land. And to this end it is the consensus of opinion among agricultural economists that the tariff did, in fact, greatly contribute." On page 53 of their report. The same case happened in France; the report admits this fact and observes.

"But there is no reason to dissent from the opinion of the French observer most competent to judge, as of the like observers in Germany, that but for the partial shelter from what might otherwise have been an annihilating competition, the peasant would not have remained in a position to avail himself of co-operation and science." "It is said", remarked the French Statesman Deschannel in 1891, "that the definite solution of the agricultural problem is to be found not in the custom house but in science. That is true," he went on, "but the custom house opens the door for science to enter, it is the custom house which permits science to share in the work of progress." Thus the readers will see that in important countries like England, Germany and France, attempts have been made at times to protect the cultivator from undue competition. The statesmen in Germany have already said that articles which are required for their own consumption as far as possible should be admitted free into their country or only a nominal revenue duty may be charged upon them. They take pretty good care that no article in the shape of manufactured goods should be allowed to enter into their country without paying a very high rate or sometimes a prohibitive rate

of import duty. They realise that even if an article of food is required to be imported from another country, its manufacturing cost should be allotted to the people of their own country. To give an instance in point wheat is taxed at the rate of 3s. 9d. per cwt. while wheat flour is taxed at the rate of 9s. 4d. so that flour importation from foreign countries may be checked. People who argue that India should sell flour or oil instead of exporting grains and oil-seeds forget that other foreign countries are sufficiently alert in recognising danger and they cannot allow India to develop its own industries.

In countries which have recently been brought under the plough large tracts of fertile land can easily produce agricultural articles at a much cheaper rate than the old countries can do. If free trade is allowed, they can easily ruin other countries where the same facilities for production do not exist. We have recently seen that during the last two years wheat in large quantities was imported from Canada and Australia and it could undersell the Indian wheat in the Indian market. After a continued agitation, the Government felt the injustice of allowing foreign wheat to enter into the country and stopped its import by putting tariff duty on it. The same happened in the case of sugar over which the Government has recently placed a high tariff duty to help the Indian sugar industry. Had this not been done, the rate of sugar would have gone so low as Rs. 5 a maund and no factory in India could stand a chance of success. The recent growth of sugar factories in the country is a clear proof that tariffs if properly worked can help the industries to a great extent.

Readers will thus see that a well considered fiscal policy chalked out in the interest of the cultivator is necessary in order to help the poor agriculturist to realise his cost of labour. The cultivator unfortunately has no control over these forces in this country and it is one of the main causes of the low prices that he gets for his produce.

All the countries today have realised that there is no possibility of helping the cultivator unless and until the cultivator is assured of a permanent price for his produce so that he may get a good return for his capital and labour. This is the basic principle upon which the prosperity of the cultivator depends and some of the countries after realising the importance of this principle have undertaken ways and means by which they have artificially fixed the price at which a commodity ought to be sold. They purchase the entire stock of a commodity and have fixed the minimum price for it. Surplus, left after sale in their country, is exported to other countries and the loss thus incurred is borne by the treasury. It is one of the ideal methods to assure the cultivator that he would get a fair return from his holding but so far as India is concerned it is a mere dream for the present. The prosperity of the cultivator is thus wound up with a number of artificial methods over which he has absolutely no control, but which can easily make or mar his future.

CHAPTER IV.

The System of General Education and Provision for Agricultural Education and Research.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

Agricultural Education and Research play a very important part in Agricultural improvement in these days of scientific development, but without a sound system of general education no efficient training in any vocation or art is possible. Education is the bed-rock upon which the foundations of all sorts of development can be laid. The Royal Commission on Agriculture have also remarked on page 519, of their report, "The figures of literacy and female education reveal in very striking fashion what are admittedly the weakest points in the educational position in India. To impart literacy is the essential object of education at the primary stage and little progress in rural development can be hoped for without it." Unfortunately in this country owing to the defective system of education in vogue a general belief has gained ground that an educated man becomes useless for out-door work or for any sort of manual labour, much less for becoming a good farmer. This belief is further heightened by daily experience of practical life. No achievement in any line of human development much less in economics is possible without an efficient general education. An educated young Indian has no opening left to him except service or the overcrowded profession of law or medicine. The education that he receives does not fit him for anything else nor does it prepare him to face boldly the struggle for existence. Self-reliance and self-confidence are absolutely wanting in him and he hates all honest professions requiring manual labour. Indian agriculturist knows to his misfortune that boys, educated at public schools, who either could not succeed in securing any job under the Government or elsewhere, become total failures at home. They cannot even supervise the operations in the field what to say of doing the work with their own hands. Instead of being helpful to the family they become a drag upon it. Even boys after finishing their education at Agricultural schools or colleges fare no better and generally view things in the same way as others. This is entirely due to the system of education which prevails in this unfortunate land under a foreign administration. It is not within our scope to discuss this most important problem in all its aspects but it is very vital to the best interests of the nation. Even further development of agriculture is not possible unless immediate steps are taken to increase literacy amongst the agriculturists so that they may be able to calculate themselves where and why they are losing and to put their house in order. Educated agriculturists as leaders of the community will be better fitted to organise the farmers and to inspire confidence in agricultural development. This is one of the main reasons why the 'Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation' has put special emphasis upon general education.

GENERAL EDUCATION

It is a well-known fact that in India, the percentage of literacy is the lowest in the world. Out of the total population of 24 crores only one crore and 86 millions (1921) are literates. The percentage of literacy is 12 in males and 1.8 in females. Unfortunately, the literacy figures for rural areas are not maintained separately but we are perfectly sure that the percentage there would be even less than half of what it is in urban areas. The total number of villages in India according to the census report of 1921 is 498,527 and there are only 171,386 Primary Schools and 11,566 Secondary Schools giving a total of 182,952 schools. This gives one school for every 2.7 villages. One should remember that out of this total, a sufficiently large number of Primary and Secondary Schools belong to towns and cities. The most liberal estimate would give one school for every 3 villages. The average distance between two villages is generally more than 5 miles. It means that boys of tender age are expected to travel this long distance for attending school in another village. Further there is no arrangement for further study after the boys leave the primary schools. There are no reading rooms or libraries in the villages nor there is any provision for books which an agriculturist can read with advantage. All Government publications are printed in English and even the agricultural reports and bulletins etc. are not available in vernaculars and if there are any they are sold at exorbitant prices. All these drawbacks keep the agriculturist totally ignorant of the activities of the department and of the researches made in foreign countries. Moreover the Education Department is keen on discouraging all private initiative in the matter of education. If any private school is started with a curriculum of its own or decides to teach books not approved by the Text-book Committee, a grant-in-aid is generally refused to it or considerably reduced and every attempt is made to place hindrance in its way. It is unfortunate that the State does not realise its duty in this connection and does not care to advance literacy. The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture reveals the sad state of affairs regarding Government efforts in this direction. It says on page 515, "Sixty-five per cent. of these recognised institutions are privately managed, though subject to Government inspection, and, of the remainder, thirty-three per cent. are managed by district boards and municipal councils and two per cent. are under direct Government management." From this statement it is obvious that but for private enterprise the number of primary schools would have remained absurdly small. Then again, in primary schools, a scholar's fee is charged from students attending them. The poor agriculturist with his slender resources has therefore to pay to the State for this education in addition to the large contributions which he makes to the Government Treasury in the form of revenue and other taxes. It is no longer a controversial question that it is the primary duty of every State to impart primary education to its children and in almost every civilised country the principle of free and compulsory education has been recognised. In India, however, whenever the attention of the Government has been drawn to this important subject, they have opposed it in one form or another. It will serve no useful purpose to go into the history of this subject. Even

in provinces where Government has had to yield to popular agitation in this respect, this reform has been introduced in limited areas, as an experimental measure only. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in its report on page 519 has remarked, "The conclusions which stand out from a study of these data are that proportion of boys of school-going age attending primary schools is still disappointingly small though it is increasing with some rapidity, and that the proportion of literates is very low both absolutely and relatively to the number of boys attending school." It further remarked and came to the conclusion on page 523 of its report, "We are convinced that the progressive adoption of the compulsory system is the only means by which may be overcome the unwillingness of parents to send their children to school, and to keep them there till literacy is attained." It is not a feature peculiar to this country alone that the parents do not want to send their children to schools. It has happened in almost every country and it is all the more natural in a poor country like India where the cultivator cannot send his children to a school without depriving himself of the help given by them in his daily work and specially where the quality of education imparted does not benefit him in the least in making them better cultivators. If the Government can make education really attractive and useful to the agriculturist and thereby demonstrate to him the utility of education, the Indian agriculturist would not be foolish enough to refuse to take advantage of education.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ILLITERACY

It is sometimes asserted that education is a transferred subject with an Indian Minister in charge thereof and the District Boards and Municipal Boards are put in sole charge of primary education. It is the duty of these elected representatives of the people in their councils to provide such education and if they fail to discharge their duties, it is no fault of the Government. We hold no brief for Indian Ministers or for the Municipal or District Boards but from the experience that we have of these institutions we can say without any fear of contradiction that financially they are not in a position even to maintain the existing schools efficiently. Nearly all of them have to depend to a great extent on educational grants. The same is the case with Indian Ministers. It can be said to their credit that they have succeeded in increasing literacy more rapidly than has ever been done before in India but nobody can perform this impossible feat without money. Let Government spend money on education in accordance with the requirements of the Ministers in-charge of education and we are sure that compulsory education would be an accomplished fact in no time. The 'Simon Commission' recognised, "So far as mere quantitative increase in the numbers under instruction is concerned, there has indeed been a phenomenal advance since the inception of the Reform. In 1917 the total school-going population of British India attending primary classes numbered 6,404,200. In 1922 it had risen to 6,897,147, and the latest figure available is 9,247,617 for the year 1927.

The figures of expenditure on primary education show an equally remarkable increase since the Reform. They are given below for seven years, each marking the end of a quinquennium, commencing with 1897.

Year	Crores of rupees					Per annum.
1897	1.10
1902	1.18
1907	1.55
1907	2.07
1912	2.93
1922	5.09
1927	6.95

Were statistics of quantitative expansion a trustworthy indication of educational advance, these might be held to furnish striking evidence of post-Reforms development."

In the much maligned state of Soviet Russia, the facts are startling so far as the development of education is concerned. The Soviet Union Facts, Descriptions and Statistics for the year 1929 on page 200 gives the following facts:—

"Out of our 100 children of school-going age 71 are in school. The percentage in cities was 98.4 and in the village 66 per cent. that the percentage is steadily rising specially in the Rural Districts."

"Under the census of 1897, the last general census before the Great War 37.9 per cent. of the male population above the age of 7 years were literate and 12.5 per cent. of the female population. During the next 15 years, literacy made no great strides among the population (as these were the days of upheaval and revolutions in Russia). A general census of 1926 further revealed that the energetic struggle against illiteracy conducted by the Soviet State was bearing fruit. For the first time in Russian history, the majority of population could read and write. The percentage of literacy was 65.5 for males and 36.7 for female "above the age of 7 years". If this could be achieved within a short period of 14 years by a State which is said to be politically very mis-managed and financially insolvent, any other State better governed and with sounder financial position ought to have done much better. Compare these figures with the solvent Government of India. In British India out of the total number of children of school-going age only a very small per cent. attends the schools. As far back as 1893 Doctor Volker who was appointed by the Government of India to enquire into the agricultural conditions in the country submitted his report. He specially recommended that general education should be introduced in the country and vernacular books on agricultural subjects be prepared. According to him, general education was the first essential for agricultural improvements but 39 years have since passed, and the Government has not done anything substantial to advance general education amongst the masses. As regards books on agriculture the less said the better. This deplorable apathy on the part of the State is mainly responsible for the wretched condition of the agriculturists and no improvement is at all possible until literacy is sufficiently advanced amongst them.

VALUE OF EDUCATION

Education makes a man efficient, intelligent and prudent citizen. It is an asset of a nation which cannot be calculated in the form of money.

Mr. Fisher spoke in the House of Commons and expressed his sentiment about education in the following terms:—

“What is it that we desire, in a broad way for our people? That they should be good citizens, reverent and dutiful, sound in mind and body, skilled in the practice of their several avocations, and capable of turning their leisure to a rational use.” In putting up a plea for an additional grant for education in 1917, the same Rt. Hon’ble gentleman again pointed out, “When we are considering a form of productive expenditure which is not only an investment but an insurance, that question cannot stand alone. We must ask not only whether we can afford to spend the money. And he calls the ‘Supplementary’ question the ‘more important and more searching.’ In spite of the universal cry for ‘economy’ Mr. Fisher maintained that ‘we should economise in the “Human capital” of the country our most precious possession, which we have too long suffered to run waste.” Speaking at Bredford he said:—

“And whether you talk to the officers at the front, who will all speak to you of the value which they attach to a well educated non-commissioned officer or private or whether you go to the head quarters’ staff, or whether you go to the great munition factories and sources of military supply, you always have the same answer to the same question. Always you will be told that education is the keynote of efficiency.”

In another speech at Manchester he made a special plea for education in the following words and these words are specially true in the case of this country:—

“I venture to plead a state of society in which learning comes first and earning comes second among the obligations of youth, not for one class only but for all youth people. At present the rich learn and the poor earn.”

“Education is the eternal debt maternity owes to youth. Now I do not care whether youth be poor or rich, we owe it education....all the education which it can afford to receive and all the education which we can afford to give.”

The condition in India is depicted in the report of the ‘Indian Statutory Commission’ Volume I page 393 in the following words, “Taking India as a whole, 17 out of every hundred men, and 2 out of every 100 women, who are twenty years of age and over, are entered as literate. In Bengal male literates within this range are 22.5 per cent.; in Madras 21.4; in Bombay 18.4; in the United Provinces 8.9; in the Punjab 9.7; in the Central Provinces 10.4; in Bihar and Orissa 12.6; in Assam 15; and in Burma 62.”

DEFECTS IN EDUCATION

We have pointed out above that general education is the ground upon which the foundation of agricultural education can rest. Unfortunately in the system of education in this country, this point is not taken into consideration. Boys are given no agricultural bias in ordinary general schools. No aptitude for out-door work or any respect or attraction for manual labour is created in Indian children with the result that when a boy joins an agricultural college he does not do so because he

has a taste for this subject but because he believes it to be a better opening for service. Upto the High School standard there is no arrangement for agricultural education and wherever agriculture is one of the optional subjects for High School Examination, the arrangement is so very defective and the quality of education so very poor that it cannot be helpful for higher agricultural education. In Denmark where agricultural education is of the highest type, it has been made a part of the High School curriculum. After leaving these schools the boys join farms, creameries or other like institutions. College education is given on a very small scale and its importance is restricted mostly to research work. It is practically impossible for boys trained in our agricultural colleges to impress upon the Indian agriculturist their own superiority by means of practical demonstration at the farm. The lack of general interest in Agricultural Education combined with the absence of means for preliminary training in schools has resulted in creating an atmosphere of unreality and artificiality in our agricultural institutions which retards the progress of agricultural education to a very great extent. If you go to an Agricultural College, you will hardly find an atmosphere different from that prevailing in ordinary colleges. It may be a bold presumption on our part to criticise the quality of education imparted in these colleges but if the tree is to be judged by its fruit, we can assert without the least fear of contradiction that it has been a total failure so far. If the graduates from these colleges cannot venture to start their own farms and run them successfully their education stands self-condemned. The Government also indirectly recognises the fact that the education imparted is not of a very high order. Whenever any research of a high character is to be made in this country, agriculturists from abroad are imported and Indians are not deemed fit for that sort of work. We cannot believe that this preference can be due only to racial discrimination. If Indians had been trained properly they could certainly be entrusted with independent charge of research work in agricultural subjects. The Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa which is the biggest institution in India for Agricultural Education and Research work, had only one Indian on its staff out of the whole cadre of imperial service men working there. If our information is correct, this gentleman also was only recently raised to this high post and now he also has retired. If with the help of foreign experts and the heavy expenditure in research work India has not succeeded in producing a sufficient number of intelligent Indians fit to be entrusted with that important branch of work, the only conclusion is that there is something wrong in the system which has to be mended at once. If it cannot be mended, it is better if the system is abolished and the poor tax payer is relieved of this unnecessary burden. The education imparted in agricultural colleges should be of a practical nature and should help the boys in the development of their character and to make them self-confident and self-reliant so that when they finish their education, they may go into the country as true leaders of the agriculturists in order to organise them and to improve their condition. When the question for agricultural research council was mooted before the Royal Agricultural Commission the colonial representatives clearly pointed out that no country

in the world employed foreigners to the extent that India did. Whenever a gentleman from abroad is appointed, he has to study the conditions prevailing in the country before he can apply his knowledge to any advantage. The India is the only unfortunate country where a foreigner can be brought in and put on the highest office without requiring him to acquire the preliminary knowledge of the conditions prevailing in it. It is difficult to find even one European officer who has acquired the ability to talk to the cultivator in his own language; and to understand him or his needs and to satisfy him. Such being the state of affairs, the foreigners naturally without getting sufficient information about prevailing conditions, begin to put their own notions into practice without caring for the wants of the Indian agriculturists and without understanding the conditions in which they have to work. This is one of the main causes why research work has not made any head-way in this country.

CONSERVATISM OF THE CULTIVATOR

It is sometimes urged that the cultivator in India is very conservative, but those who assert this fact, forget that the cultivators are conservative every where in the world and a poor man cannot ruin himself by hazarding an experiment of whose utility he is not fully convinced. The Royal Agricultural Commission has rightly remarked that there is very little which can be taught to the agriculturist of this country by the so-called expert in charge of the department. They observe, "We are surprised to find that 'disappointingly' little has been done by the department of agriculture in the case of manure and village implements."

The Royal Agricultural Commission have further admitted on page 38 of their report that "Agricultural Research in this country is still in its infancy". Discussing the position of Pusa they say, "We wish to restore to it that prestige in the world of scientific research in agriculture which it once enjoyed but which the evidence we received shows that it has unfortunately lost." The main causes of this state of affairs at Pusa are revealed by the written evidence of the Imperial Agricultural Department Association, Pusa, submitted before the Commission and published on page 294 of evidence volume I part II. The Association remarked, "The Association is of opinion that paucity of knowledge regarding the indigenous theory, traditional methods and the existing conditions of agriculture and its problem is a great setback to any kind of progress. The agricultural classes are generally illiterate and meet with problems, the existence or importance of which they are unable to recognise, but real progress depends on their solution. Until therefore a systematic survey of their problems is made for them, the amount of labour and money spent on unsystematised research will not do much good to the country". Further, they say, "The Association is inclined to think that the right type of men have been wanting in the department. If one glances at the past history of this department, it will be found that research has been taken up in a very unsystematic way". Discussing the lack of knowledge of cultivator's problems, they have rightly pointed out, "The lack of knowledge of the various problems confronted by the agriculturists in the course of their actual field work is also an imped-

ment to the systematic investigation on scientific lines. Agricultural experts who are recruited from abroad are sometimes inclined to transplant the methods obtaining in their country without modifying them according to the local conditions." They have added, "The language difficulty in the case of European experts and the official position of the experts furnish another set of handicaps. The experts cannot very often get into close touch with cultivators to study the actual practice of agriculture for the improvement of which they are primarily intended and have not infrequently to depend upon their subordinates for collecting first hand information." Discussing the lack of comradeship in the laboratory, they have pointed out, "The existing distinction between the Imperial, Provincial and Subordinate services tends to produce a harmful effect on the working of the departments. The marked difference in pay, prospects and status of these services constituted and officered as they are at present, requires to some extent a readjustment as these differences would ordinarily create an artificial sense of superiority in the members of the higher branches and thereby very often prevent the feeling of comradeship amongst scientific workers which is highly desirable but which is under existing differences hardly attainable."

Those who have been to the agricultural institute at Pusa must have been struck by observing that it is no longer a temple of knowledge where all could sit together without distinction of caste or creed. A lot of distrust and place which has always lacked in continuity and systematic continuance of research work.

The main work, for which the agriculturists ought to be indebted to the research work, is the work of improved varieties of cane. This success is due to the personality and zeal of the cane-breeder who happens to be an Indian who is fired with the enthusiasm that is required for a research worker to become successful in his investigation. We are perfectly sure that if an opportunity had been given to other capable Indians, many of the knotty problems that confront the agriculturists would have been solved long before now.

When there is hardly anything new to be given by the agricultural experts, one can very well realise the position of the colleges and schools where agriculture is claimed to be taught to the young men of the country. The dissemination of knowledge never precedes the knowledge itself.

BOOKS IN INDIAN VERNACULARS

In our agricultural institutions, theoretical knowledge of scientific principles of agriculture and alike subjects is given in English and no attempt has been made to write standard books in the vernaculars of the different provinces though the need for such books was pointed out by Dr. Volkar, the first man to investigate this problem about 40 years ago. The vernacular course fixed for boys in different provinces can hardly be deemed to afford sufficient grounding for boys meant for higher education. It is a general belief prevailing amongst these so-called experts that theoretical or scientific knowledge cannot be imparted in the vernaculars; but it is quite unjustified. Language is the vehicle of human thought and the best vehicle for everybody is that in which he thinks.

EXPENDITURE ON AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

Mr. Darling in his well-known book 'Punjab Peasants in Prosperity and in Debt' states on page 175, "Expenditure on agriculture is on a much lower scale than in the west as is clear from the following figures, which show state expenditure upon agriculture and in four western countries:—

Country.	Per 1,000 of the population.	Per 1,000 acres cultivated.
Germany (1910)	945	705
U. S. (1919-20)	1,020	210
U. K. (1921)	960	1,380
Italy (1925-26)	255	1,840
Punjab (1926-27)	139	95
British Indian (1924-25)	34	30

Thus we have tried to show that in the first place there are no opportunities for affording a grounding for agricultural education which is the first essential for a scientific study of the subject and in the second there is no arrangement for finding out the real difficulties of the farmer and then for solving them.

CHAPTER V

The Economic organisation of the Industry and in particular among farmers and Co-operative method of purchase and sale, Co-operative credit and Co-operative Insurance.

COOPERATION IN INDIA

Co-operation is the only means by which poor men can combine and pool their resources for their improvement and uplift, but very little has been done in this connection and whatever little has been done, is limited to Credit Societies in general. In some of the provinces, the rate of interest charged by the Co-operative Societies is as high as 15 per cent. to 18 per cent. These Co-operative Societies backed by the Government and getting a number of Legislative facilities in the matter of stamps, court fees and the like, have not been able to reduce the rate of interest. The main difficulty in co-operative development has been that educated Indians who are interested in the welfare of their country, do not join the movement as they do not see eye to eye with Government officials who generally dominate in the working of these societies. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee has therefore recommended that official control over these societies should be slackened. The credit societies are sometimes looked upon as institutions started to ruin the money-lender. It has been our belief from the very beginning that the Co-operative Credit Societies cannot make much headway in this country. The cultivator cannot offer a good security for the loan as he is not the owner of the land he cultivates nor of bullocks he employs. The result has been that most of the members of these societies have been forced after a few years to fall back into the clutches of the money-lender. Real indebtedness has not decreased; it has rather increased. There is hardly any society in the country where a member has freed himself from debt during the course of his membership. The cause of all this is quite apparent to a keen observer. The Royal Agricultural Commission has very rightly remarked that the difficulty of the cultivator is not that he cannot get the money but that he cannot repay. Debt redemption cannot be brought about by any means whatsoever unless the repaying capacity of the cultivator is first tackled and improved. In other countries where co-operation has succeeded in the form of Credit Societies, the cultivator is generally a peasant proprietor who can raise money by offering his land as security for the loan advanced. Besides this the activities of the organisers of such societies do not simply end by forming the Credit Societies but they also try to explore all the avenues by which the income of a cultivator is likely to be increased. To plan a society through which the income of the cultivator is likely to be increased, requires fore-sight, intelligence and enthusiasm but all these qualities are generally lacking in official organisations. It is only the public spirited people who can take to this kind of work. In India, unfortunately a public worker is generally looked down upon by the

officials and on account of political differences of opinion he is not allowed to join these societies and is forced to keep himself back from taking any active part in their organisation. Without the non-official support these societies are generally unpopular, and so long as this state of affairs continues, there is no likelihood of their success. It is essential for their success that public spirited gentlemen who do not care for official favours or frowns, take up this work and the officials should only look to their registration and audit so that there may be no chance for defalcations or dishonesty.

DEFECTS IN COOPERATION

In villages where such a Co-operative Society exists we find that good cultivators do not generally care to join it on account of the risk involved in the joint and unlimited liability which forms the basis of the society. Moreover, these cultivators can get money at a cheaper rate of interest than the rate at which the society can advance money to them and further they can keep their money transactions secret while in the society, loans become generally public, a thing which they would do their best to avoid. Amongst ordinary members of the society, co-operation in the real sense of the term is altogether lacking. They have not learnt the spirit of co-operation nor have they grasped the underlying idea upon which the whole system is based. They consider it to be merely an easy method of getting loans and beyond that they have no concern with the institution. It may be that some of these members know the principles of co-operation but they have never realised their spirit and have never understood it. If the real spirit of co-operation is once understood and its advantages are brought home to the peasantry, there is no doubt that they would improve in their economic conditions as well as mental out-look. As far as we know there is not even one single village in the whole of India where the idea of co-operation has caught amongst the people and an atmosphere favourable to its growth has been created. We have said also somewhere that the idea of making money and calculating profit and loss in agriculture is so foreign to the Indian mind that the cultivator neither realises the heavy burden of the high rate of interest nor does he feel that a lower rate of interest is of much advantage to him. Unless he can be made to calculate these advantages and disadvantages he cannot feel inclined to join these institutions. Agricultural operations cannot brook delays and if money is not available at the proper time, the cultivator is entirely ruined. That being so, enough money to meet his needs at the proper time is the only thing which influences him in getting loans. Unfortunately in the case of members of co-operative societies neither it is possible to get the requisite amount of money nor to get it at the appropriate time on account of the red-tapism that often prevails in Government departments. These causes scare him away from the Co-operative Societies. The rigour with which money is usually realised is another thing that frightens him. We do not mean to suggest that loans should be recklessly advanced without having any regard to security nor do we mean that the applications should not be properly scrutinised but so long as the real meaning and purpose of co-operation is not learnt by the cultivator, we have to be

alert in avoiding all such causes as tend to frighten him away. The main difficulty lies in the fact that we have begun at the wrong end. Instead of increasing the income of the cultivator and making arrangements for the investment of his savings we have started with the credit side of it and that too with official control. If you can manage to put a small amount more in the pocket of the cultivator, over and above his present earning, he would better realise the value of co-operation. By organising societies for providing improved methods of agriculture, for selling his produce at a higher rate and for purchasing his requirements at cheap rates, etc., we can create confidence in the agriculturist and thereby impress upon him the real purpose of co-operation. These things, however, cannot be taken up unless the organisers themselves possess adequate knowledge of rural economic and are well versed in agriculture and in its connected operations. The organisation of societies on these lines would help in increasing the earning of the cultivator and at the same time convince him that co-operation is a paying proposition. We have in view that stage of co-operative development when the societies will consider it a part of their duty to take charge of all agricultural operations and of marketing the produce of their constituent members. Our ideal is to create a sort of family of the entire village where every member is expected to perform the duty allotted to him and is paid according to the work done by him. In Denmark, the Co-operative Societies advise the cultivator as to the best cow he should purchase and also the place where it can be had. Not only that, they negotiate the transaction for him and give him advice as to the best and cheapest food for the animal. The society disposes of his milk in the best market and supplies him with all his requirements. Such societies in this country are likely to succeed. What is necessary is that the man who organises such a society, should know his business and have the enthusiasm not only to undertake such a hard work but to persevere in the face of any adverse circumstances. Purchase and Sale Societies, Societies for Agricultural Improvement, Societies for better farming, etc., are the real need of the day but they all depend for their success upon uncommon fore-sight and very hard work. If instead of frittering away energy over vast areas the scope of such societies is limited in the beginning and all efforts are concentrated on one small portion, say a district or two and there such societies are successfully worked, it will in itself be the best propaganda to popularise them amongst the peasant classes.

SAVINGS OF THE NATION ARE THE KEYNOTE OF ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT

The success of every banking institution, be it an ordinary Commercial Bank or a Co-operative Bank, depends entirely on the savings of the people. No country can succeed in its economic development without money got of the savings of the nation. Admitting that there are very few cultivators who have any surplus or savings to keep by for a rainy day, still, every one of them has some money to spare at the time of the harvest. If at such a time facilities be provided to invest this money in a reliable savings bank, it can form a nucleus for the formation of a prosperous banking system. It will automatically teach

the cultivator the value and utility of savings and will give him a chance to regulate his expenditure and thus will enable him to resist temptations for reckless and unprofitable transactions. A pass-book in his pocket would create a sort of confidence and hope in the future in the mind of the cultivator and he would learn to save money for religious or social ceremonies and would avoid running into debt. A campaign on these lines is bound to provide sufficient fund at cheap rates of interest for the needs of the cultivator. It will be the cultivators' money utilised for their own purpose and thereby the question of cheap rates of interest will also be solved to some extent. If such an institution is started, the surplus money with the Commercial Banks during the slack season can be made available to the cultivators' savings banks. A mutual understanding between a Cultivators' Bank and a Commercial Bank will help in making the economic position of the country much stronger than what it is today. We feel that the Cultivators' Savings Bank is the first need of the hour. The post office savings banks cannot take the place of the Cultivators' Savings Banks. It is possible that the post office savings banks may be made to have some sort of commercial connection with the Cultivators' Banks but the latter should be quite an independent institution.

COOPERATIVE INSURANCE

Co-operative insurance is another line of activity which is essential for such a precarious industry as agriculture. In order to compensate the agriculturist for any disaster befalling him by the death of his bullock or by the destruction of his crop, by draught, flood or pest, establishment of Co-operative Insurance Societies is essential. Unfortunately no statistics are available. It is a huge task and necessary spade work has to be done at public expense before starting them. The attention of the Government has been drawn to this important subject but nothing has so far been done. Life Insurance, Marriage Insurance and the like on co-operative lines can also be started with advantage provided the expenditure involved in the management of such societies is not allowed to be top-heavy as is the case with many official organisations in the country. Insurance Societies for different purposes have served the cultivator in other parts of the world and it is time that such societies were started in this country also.

HELP GIVEN TO COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The Government in other countries have helped the Co-operative Societies in a number of ways, and substantial grants are given to them. It may not be out of place here to mention the ways in which France developed her co-operative system. In 1894 the Legislature passed a law sanctioning the formation of credit societies for furthering agricultural production. This was followed in 1895 by a law which authorised the Savings Banks to devote a fifth of their capital and the whole of their income to financing the Caisses Locales. In 1897 the Charter of the Bank of France was renewed on the condition that it advanced a sum of 40,000,000 francs for the assistance of agricultural credit, while additional funds were made available by an annual share in the profits of the bank. In 1899 the Caisses Regionales

were established. The co-operative credit system for the individual members of the syndicates, is also available for productive enterprises undertaken by co-operative associations such as creameries, etc. In 1910 the Legislature further extended agricultural credit so that long term advances might be made to individuals for the improvement and acquisition of small agricultural holdings. There is in this way a complete provision for agricultural credit largely supported out of State funds in France. The system is a direct form of subsidy to agriculture, inasmuch as the State supplies the money to the Regional Banks at 2 per cent. per annum and the member of the Co-operative Society gets his advance as a rule at 4 per cent. per annum.

It is too much to hope, in these days of universal depression and deficit budgets that Government would spare money for starting agricultural credit societies which would advance loans to cultivators at a low rate of interest. When the Government itself is borrowing money at 5 per cent. and more it surely cannot be expected to lend money to the cultivators at 3 or 4 per cent. But it can follow in the footsteps of the French Government. It can make it compulsory for the private banks to reserve a certain percentage, however low it may be, of their profits for advancing to the credit societies at 2 per cent. and the latter can lend it to cultivators at 4 per cent. or the Government can borrow money expressly for this purpose and can advance it to the credit societies at the same rate of interest at which it borrows itself and the societies can lend it to the cultivators at a little higher rate the difference between the two rates being utilised for defraying the working expenses.

CHAPTER VI

The institution of schemes for the improvement of livestock and crops, the standardisation of produce and the control of weeds and vermin.

IMPROVEMENT OF LIVE STOCK

The history of the improvement of livestock in this country is a very sad one. The first thing started here was to take the best cows available and to cross them with imported bulls. This experiment was started long ago and is being still persisted in in the military department. From the very start the result obtained has been that the first progeny remains healthy and the amount of milk is generally increased; but the later progeny does not remain immune from the different diseases prevalent in the country. These cross-bred cattle become easily affected by one disease or another and so their progeny cannot be easily continued. In spite of this defect which is a very serious one both from the breeding point of view and also from the point of view of national industry, the experiment is allowed to continue simply because the highly paid experts cannot be weaned from their ideas even when experience has proved them to be wrong. Best cows of India are thus selected, crossed and destroyed and the country suffers a very heavy loss in this national industry. In our opinion the Government if it has the interests of the country at heart should not allow this practice to continue even for a moment.

As we have pointed out in another place, the work of improvement is always entrusted to the foreign experts imported at very high salaries. They, without having any knowledge of the climatic and the other genetic conditions of the country, begin to import the methods adopted in their own country. They go on making experiments without any fruitful result. The help which the people of the land can render them in their investigations is not availed of firstly on account of their feeling of prestige and race arrogance and secondly on account of their standard of living being different altogether and thirdly on account of the want of knowledge of the language of the common people. They do not care to learn the language of the country which they are imported to serve. The Royal Agricultural Commission in their report has to admit the excellence of the Indian breeder in the following words, "If enquiry were to be made into the history of such breeds as the Ponwar of the United Provinces, the Hariana and Sahiwal of the Punjab, the Thar Parkar and Sindhi (Karachi) of Sind, the Malvi of Central India, the Kankrej of Gujrat, the Gir of Kathiawar, the Gaolao of the Central Provinces and the Ongole of Madras, we believe it would be found, in most cases, that their excellence was due to the care bestowed on them by the professional cattle breeders, usually nomadic who were formerly common in India, but who are now abandoning grazing as the result of the spread of cultivation. Many references to these herdsmen and to the part they took in supply of

cattle to cultivators will be found in gazeteers describing former conditions in India. In some localities, their disappearance has been welcomed, for they frequently combined the profession of crop raiding with that of cattle rearing; but, in districts in which they adhered to their legitimate business, their loss is to be deplored. They were the only members of the rural population who paid attention to breeding and understood the management of cattle; they usually worked and understood the management of cattle; they usually worked under unfavourable conditions, but their skill in selecting and tending was so considerable that they were able to show herds." (Page 199.) They should have been taken advantage of. This important discovery has been made after a lapse of more than 60 years since the department was started but unfortunately by this time most of these well-informed people have disappeared.

In order to begin an improvement in breeding the first point necessary is that the breeder should know his own mind or the Government or the tax-payer who employs him may dictate the policy he ought to follow and the ideal he ought to aim at. Unfortunately in this country, the tax-payer is illiterate, and he does not know his own mind. The Government is enamoured of new fangled theories and puts too much reliance on the experts imported from foreign countries who are put as heads of the department, and refuse to believe that there is any merit in the old Indian methods. The Government seldom cares to see whether the policy and ideal adopted by one expert has been taken up by his successor and the thread of investigation is continued. Invariably we find that one line of work is given up as soon as the expert retires and radically new lines are adopted by the new expert who takes his place. It is why the Royal Agricultural Commission has remarked (P. 17.2) "Lack of organisation with consequent lack of continuity in the work, was certainly in part responsible for failure". This method has a further disadvantage that nobody can be held responsible for the work and generally the former expert and his policy is condemned by the latter expert resulting in unnecessary loss to the nation.

One really wonders as to why the breed goes on deteriorating in this country where milk and milk products were found in abundance not very long ago. A vegetarian country depending mostly upon milk for nutrition cannot afford to neglect this important ingredient of their economic life. Now the consumption of milk in this country is the lowest in the world and infant mortality is the highest. The Royal Agricultural Commission on page 223 admitted, "All the evidence available points to the conclusion that the consumption of fresh milk in India is very small when compared with such countries as the United States of America, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland." It means that we are killing our future race for want of proper nourishment. In season and out of season Indians are accused that they do not feed their cows properly and they abuse them and deteriorate the breed, but the accusers forget that a starving man must have a famished cow. Raise the standard of living of the poor and you will find that there are better and stronger cattle. Increase the facilities by which milk production becomes a paying industry and you will improve the breed. If the Government adopt suitable means to make the cultivator richer

and create facilities for making this industry profitable every thing will be allright. We shall presently show that the poor cultivator is not responsible for the state of affairs prevailing in this country but before doing so we will like to put a very pertinent question to the Government and its experts who are responsible for the improvement of cattle breeding. The Department of Agriculture was started in this country in the year 1867 but have they come to any decision as to what is to be their future policy and ideal even now after a lapse of about 65 years? Is it creating animals giving the largest amount of milk per head or is it producing the best draft animals or a combination of both? We have not been able to get a clear answer to this question from the policy followed by them so far. Sometimes they follow one policy and sometimes the other. This shilly-shallying method of work and playing with the poor tax-payer's money is really deplorable. What the Government should do is to settle its policy and aim once for all and continue it till the ideal is reached. If they cannot do it let them wash their hands off the business and leave the problem to solve itself.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

A great deal is said about the religious sentiment of a Hindu in killing a cow. Most of the existing defects are attributed to the increase in the number of useless animals that are allowed to breed. But this accusation is hardly tenable. We have not come across any country or any human-being who is devoid of sentiment altogether. Different races, nations and classes have their own sentiments and it has never been an easy thing to destroy those sentiments altogether. An expert has to take things as they are without going into the question whether any sentiments prevailing in a race or nation are reasonable or unreasonable, good or bad, useful or harmful. It is not his business to dabble in those matters and criticise them, if he finds that he is incapable of doing anything till those sentiments are totally eradicated, the best course for him is to stay his hands and leave it to the leaders of public opinion to rid the nation of those unreasonable sentiments.

So long as the Hindus have a religious faith in the sacredness of the cow any attempt to destroy useless and old animals and keep alive and breed only milkers or draft animals will have to be given up. Call this regard for the cow a prejudice or a superstition or give it any other name but you cannot disregard it. It is a prejudice or a superstition for which Hindus without number will be ready to lay down their lives. The problem of disposing of old and useless bullocks and cows is very delicate. It cannot be solved by the monosyllable verdict 'kill' of the foreign expert. In case we produce good milkers with bad draft bullocks or *vice versa*, how would you dispose of the bullocks or the cows? You cannot force the people to sell their bullocks or cows to be slaughtered. If you do so you must be prepared for riots and bloodshed in every part of the country. This is therefore a very important question and cannot be lightly dealt with. How many riots and pitched battles have raged round this question in the past. Even today when religious feelings are losing much of their intensity it is a very common cause of quarrel or a riot? The idea of disposing of the old and useless cattle by killing them should therefore be abandoned for ever. It is true that if such cattle are kept alive the stock of food which admittedly

is very small will be further depleted. But circumstanced as we are we cannot help it. All life is sacred in the eyes of a Hindu. 'Not to kill' is his religion. He does not grudge feeding his 'cow' which is past the age of calving. There are asylums for taking care of old, decrepit and diseased cattle maintained by charitably disposed persons. The problem is not to be solved in the manner pointed out by the foreign expert. It is to be solved by producing more fodder and by producing abundant pastures. The problem of breeding good milkers and good draft cattle is baffling the foreign expert. It is in fact his own creation. There was no such problem in old India. She had her own professional cattle breeders who had succeeded wonderfully where the modern experts have failed. We have referred to them already. The remedy therefore is obvious. Dispense with this foreign expert knowledge and draw upon the experience and knowledge of those Indians who are trained in the branch of animal husbandry. Here we might be confronted with the opinion of the Royal Agricultural Commission in favour of the Government cattle breeding farms. They have very highly spoken of about some of these farms. But with due deference to their opinion we are constrained to remark that things are not really the same as the Commissioners think they are. To produce a few good-milking animals is not the solution of the problem. Possibly any man with ordinary common sense about him and with sufficient amount of money at his disposal would have achieved just as good a result if not better. We remember that on one occasion in the U. P. Legislative Council a responsible officer, the director of agriculture in answer to a question justified the action of the Government expert in not maintaining the milk register and not milking the cows at all. If a responsible officer of the Government could justify such an obviously absurd action of his subordinates, there is the end of the matter. We were surprised to find in the Hissar Farm that no milk records were kept, nor could we easily trace the history of the different animals bred. No balanced ration was tried or given and even Silage feeding, so highly spoken of and recommended by the Commission had not been adopted though a paacca silo had been built. Under such circumstances how can there be any possibility that anything is likely to be achieved through the labours of the department. We do not mind the time taken up by the experts to create an ideal animal but their lines and methods should be scientific, continuous and systematic. There is no Government Farm throughout the length and breadth of this land where a herd for breeding purposes can be purchased and the quality of the cattle relied upon? If after a continuous work for more than 60 years it has not been possible for the Government department to bring into existence an ideal animal, there is hardly any likelihood that anything substantial will be achieved in the near future. The Commission have deplored the wastage and unsystematic working of these farms, still they have given a very rosy picture of the future. We are sorry that we cannot share their optimism. We have to judge the future by the past.

ADULTERATION OF MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

One of the greatest single causes for the deterioration of the breed is the neglect of the Government to check adulteration of milk products. Every Western Government has taken special care to avoid adulteration

in milk and milk products. Penal laws to enforce such regulations are found in every country but in India it is not so. The Royal Agricultural Commission admitted in their report on page 232, "We believe that the almost universal practice of watering milk has been largely responsible, not only for the wretched conditions of the urban supply, but for the neglect of milk cattle. We have in India an illustration of Gresham's well-known law; here it applies to milk, not to money; but it is no less true of milk than that of money that the bad drives out the good. Watered milk has been driving pure milk out of Indian cities until at the present day, the price of pure milk is higher than even in the large towns of Britain, and even at the price of six as. per Bombay seer (ten pence per quart) very small supplies are forthcoming." At another place they remarked (230), "If the adulteration of milk can be effectively dealt with and the time is reached when the supply of milk to cities becomes a business in which honest men can compete with prospects of success, the existing keen demand for good cows will be intensified; and much useful work lies before livestock experts in developing the milking qualities of these valuable breeds of cattle". Adulteration in milk and milk-products has been practised more or less in every country but the Governments have always realised their duty to adopt measures against this abuse and have always dealt with it with a strong hand. A writer has said regarding Italy, "Since the early ages when cows began giving their milk to be sold in the cities, it has been diluted in Italy. Among the 'Terrorist' laws made by Mussolini is one forbidding a dairy to sell watered milk; the punishment for such an offence is imprisonment, a fine, and the closing of the shop for a certain time. If the offence is repeated the licence to sell milk is taken away entirely. So used were the Italians to doing exactly as they pleased that they paid no attention to the new law, and in defiance of it watered their milk even more than had been their habit. But they found that Italy had a ruler who made laws that were meant to be obeyed. Dozens of milk shops were closed in every Italian city, while the owners were given plenty of time in prison to think of new ways of evading the law in the future;" (the Rayat and the Statutory Commission page 59). In Denmark no dairy is allowed to use Government brands if it is found to use adulteration and penal laws are applied to the offender. Similar laws exist in Great Britain. The Royal Agricultural Commission have gone into detail of this question and they say, "We suggest, therefore, that with the view of providing the urban population with the supplies of milk for which they ask, which the vegetarian habits of many make so necessary for health, and of which growing difficulties have deprived them, municipalities should take such action as may be required to augment and cheapen the milk supply. We further recommend that the necessary statutory authority should be conferred on them to enable them to provide cowsheds outside municipal limits, to promote or assist schemes aiming at large scale milk production, and to establish depots for the collection, pasteurising and cooling of milk in localities in which milk in quantity is offered to them by co-operative societies or other sellers.

"The purity of ghi like that of milk is a subject affecting the interests of the producer. Ghi making is not only a widespread indus-

try, but an important aid to successful dairy farming on a large scale. Many complaints of the adulteration of ghi have been made to us and our attention has also been directed to the increasing sale of substitutes for ghi, if these are properly described, and are sold under names which do not lead the public to suppose that they are ghi; for in all countries such substances are recognised as cheap and wholesome foods; but there are grave objections to misdescription. The position in India is now very similar to that which arose in the British Butter Market when margarine was first introduced. To protect the producer of butter from unfair competition, and the consumer from imposition, the sale, under the name of butter, of any article composed partly of fat from other sources than milk was prohibited; and to prevent sellers of margarine from using names which might lead customers to think that they were being served with some kind of butter, the law required that names under which manufacturers proposed to sell their margarine must be approved by the Department of Agriculture."

"We are of opinion that similar action is required to protect producers of ghi, and we believe that, unless municipal authorities possess and exercise powers of control, the difficulty already experienced by persons desirous of purchasing pure ghi will increase for the certain effect of unrestricted adulteration and substitution would be to drive the genuine product out of the market." (Page 234.)

Thus the readers will see that the first stage to begin work is the adoption of Legislative measure and executive action to stop adulteration by a strong hand. If the Government takes even half the interest that they are taking in suppressing political agitation, this mischief can be done away with once for all. The Royal Agricultural Commission have rightly remarked, "That unless some limit is placed on adulteration, the milk sold in cities must continue to be not only bad but very expensive." The proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State show that the members have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Government to take action against the imported oil advertised as ghi in the bazar. Several ways of effecting this have been pointed out both from the platform and the press but so far the Government has not cared to take action to check this evil.

It cannot be said that India is a place where good cattle were never found. From time immemorial, the people of this country laid special emphasis upon improving the breed. The Royal Agricultural Commission also admits where it says that as regards endurance and forage cattle, India produced the best cattle amongst tropical countries. In olden times, the practice of dedicating the best bull was a religious duty and the best bulls were selected and set free. Even the best cows simply to improve the breed were treated in the same manner. But unfortunately on account of the pressure on land, grazing grounds being turned into cultivated area, forests being closed for grazing the best cows and buffaloes are either taken to the cities and after one lactation period are slaughtered or purchased by the military and after crossing them with foreign bulls, the progeny is made extinct. This practice is allowed to go on from a very long period. Still cattle are found in sufficient numbers to serve as the basis from which improvement can start.

The subject of animal husbandry is very important from various points of view. If properly developed it can give employment to a sufficiently large number of people and can help in developing agricultural industries in connection with milk-products. The average produce of the land can not be increased without the use of manure and farm-yard manure is the best and the cheapest for which there can be no substitute and it is from the farm cattle and cows that the manure is obtainable.

SEED IMPROVEMENT IS OF NO AVAIL WITHOUT GOOD MARKETING

It must be admitted that some very useful work has been done by the department in seed-improvement. New strains have been developed and better seeds have been discovered but in spite of all this barring the varieties of cane-seeds, very little has been done in popularising improved varieties of other seeds. Here again one is forced to remark that the apathy, in improving market condition, has been the main reason why the agriculturist has not taken to cultivate these improved varieties. It is totally incorrect to say that the conservatism of the cultivator is responsible for not making use of better varieties of seeds. From our own experience we can testify that the cultivator will gladly take to a better variety provided he is convinced that the amount of profit is likely to increase proportionately to the amount of extra labour and expense incurred in the cultivation of new varieties. We quote below the deplorable condition of the market in this connection from no less an authority than Dr. Clouston who remained for a number of years the adviser of Government of India in agricultural matters. He was deputed by no less an authority than the Imperial Agricultural Research Council to attend one of the biggest fairs in England and he found that no attempt had till then been made to popularise the new varieties in the foreign market though a High Commissioner is kept in London for the purpose. What is the good of improving a variety of crop unless an attempt is made to keep that variety available in the internal and external market? It is nothing less than the waste of public money if it is spent on devising better seed without at the same time creating a better market for the crop raised from it. As to the standardisation of produce the less said the better. Market conditions are the worst in this country and the difference of prices between good and bad article is the smallest. There is no incentive to produce better varieties of articles in this country. In the United States of America the Government spends very large amounts of money in grading and standardising the produce. They have not restricted the grading only to grains and dry produce; even grading in fruits and vegetable is done with success. It is why huge quantities of agricultural produce are annually exported from U. S. A. to other countries. No development in agricultural conditions is possible without proper grading and standardisation of the product.

PESTS AND DISEASE

Though sufficient money is annually spent on the investigation of pests in this country there is hardly any achievement so far made by the experts of the Department of Agriculture. All the old diseases that the cultivator had to contend against, are still there, and on account of the new crosses, some more have been added. In other countries a great

deal of practical work is done in this connection. The methods of control which are suggested by the experts are generally either impracticable or prohibitive on account of the high cost involved. It would have been much better if only the information on different pests were culled from different countries and circulated amongst the people instead of employing high paid experts whose historical investigations take long to mature and whose work of control seldom begins.

We should not however be understood to mean that none of foreign experts has contributed anything useful to the country. We do admit that there have been and there are and are likely to be foreign experts who have unreservedly given the benefit of their vast knowledge and great experience to our country. We appreciate their work and are thankful to them. What we mean is that a foreign expert however able and enthusiastic in his work cannot do, in the very nature of things, so much for our people as his Indian compeer can do. He has to work under great limitations such as ignorance of the vernaculars, his inability to mix with the people on familiar terms, want of knowledge of Indian sentiments, manners, customs and conditions. He cannot have patriotic feelings and fired with zeal for doing good to people. A foreign expert may be imported to train Indians in some special subject for a limited time, but he should not be allowed to guide and control the policy of the Government in nation-building subjects, as education, industries and agriculture.

WEED CONTROL

No attempt has ever been made to investigate the question of weeds systematically in this country. Fortunately the use of primitive implements and the antiquated plough has helped the cultivator to destroy them, but the subject deserves sound study and careful investigation to be profitable to the Indian Agriculturist.

CHAPTER VII

The organization of transport, the provision of power and wireless, the help to subsidiary rural industries and the development of afforestation.

COMMUNICATION

In order to find a better market, facilities for communication are necessary. The opening up of a country is the first requisite for creating a market. Nobody can doubt that the country has been to a far greater extent opened up today than formerly. During the Moghul or the Hindu period facilities for extensive communication were not available. There were very few metalled roads connecting one city with another. In that period of civilization railways were unknown and fast conveyances were not in existence. Camels, horses and bullocks were the only means of conveyance. No doubt, rivers were used for navigation purposes and for transport but the area served by them was very small. The traffic was therefore very much restricted. It cannot be denied that the present conditions are a vast improvement upon old days but it is doubtful whether these facilities have served us as blessings or have further added to our miseries. Nobody can deny that it is much easier and more convenient now to send goods from one place to another and to travel by railways but a discussion of the effects that the system of railways in India has had upon the economic condition of the agriculturist, is essential for our purpose.

EXPENSIVE RAILWAYS

Railways have not been a blessing only. There is another side of the picture. They have cost the country huge sums of money given away either as grants or in the shape of concessions to the railway companies. It is not within our province to go into the detailed history of how India paid huge sums of money by way of interest to the investors. But this can be said that the working of the railways has been very costly and the administration too heavy. The freight and fare charges have, therefore, to be kept at an unreasonably high figure, for otherwise it would not be possible to make the two ends meet. All the machinery, even small parts have been imported from England and other European countries at an enormous cost. Unless and until the working and administration expenses are brought down, foreign capital is replaced by Indian and machinery is manufactured in India there can be little hope of reducing the freight and fare charges. There is abundant iron and coal in the mines of the country and it does not redound to the credit of the Government and private enterprise that no arrangements have yet been made to manufacture railway machinery in the country.

RUINOUS EFFECT OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM

The expensive railway system has had a very pernicious effect on the movement of agricultural produce from one part of the country to the other. The import and export charges become so heavy that the

commodities cannot fetch a fair price. The freight charges are fixed, they cannot be increased or decreased by the exporter or importer. The former, therefore, tries to purchase a commodity as cheap as he can at the source and sell it as dear as he can at the destination in order that he may earn as great a profit as possible. The poor peasant is, consequently, compelled to sell his produce cheap. He is also exposed to the competition with producers of foreign countries who are able to undersell him, who produce per acre more than he can and have to pay very low shipment charges. The main effect of these facilities of communication afforded to foreign producers on the economical life of the country has been a complete ruin of practically of all our industries. The artisan who cannot take advantage of the new inventions, is exposed to competition with the cheap imported articles manufactured by mass production at a nominal cost. If you go to an Indian market, you will find the whole market flooded with foreign articles which is only possible on account of facilities of communication. India today is the market of the entire world and its manufacturers, if any, have to compete with the whole world. This is one of the greatest dangers that the opening of a country brings in its trail. If a country is opened up and at the same time developed, it is a blessing but mere opening up of a country without the arrangement for developing its industries sometimes becomes the cause of its ruin. This is what has happened in the case of India. While some cities and towns opened up by railways have flourished, the rural area has immensely suffered economically. No doubt the primary products which were not readily saleable before, have found a market today; but whatever little advantage the cultivator has got by the sale of these commodities in one direction he has lost a good deal more in another direction. All artisans have now been forced to live upon land. The result is that the area under cultivation per head is daily decreasing and as pointed out by the Royal Agricultural Commission in its report, the poor cultivator has to remain unemployed for more than six months in the year. Indian newspapers which sometimes delight in quoting unemployment figures of England should remember that, roughly speaking, half of the population of India always remains unemployed.

A glance at the Commercial history, will at once convince even a superficial observer that the railways have not always been to the advantage of India. In the years 1929-30-31, we found that Australia and Canada could bring their wheat from thousands of miles away and sell it in the Indian market cheaper than the Indian wheat. The foreign charges from these countries to Indian ports, a distance of thousands of miles, is only 8 as. a maund while the freight charges from Lyalpur to Calcutta, a distance of about 1,000 miles, were more than one rupee and a half, i.e., the Indian cultivator has to pay three times the freight of what is charged for the same commodities from Canada or Australia. Similarly the freight charges of sugar from Java to Indian ports are about 8 as. a maund while from Bombay or Calcutta to Meerut are more than Rs. 2. It is now an open secret that special rates were allowed by the railways for exporting articles to Indian ports but the same concession was not available for distributing the same

commodity inland with the result that the industries which could utilise the raw products were starved. Whether the railways are worked in the interest of the cultivator or otherwise will be apparent by a careful study of the report of the Royal Agricultural Commission. The Royal Agricultural Commission have been very cautious in dealing with the real grievances of the Indian community in this respect but they have had to admit facts which loudly condemn the system in vogue. They admit that the railways are unable to import fuel at cheap rates from the forest to the cultivator so that he may not be under the necessity of burning his manure and may avoid immense loss to his crop. To those who cry that the cultivator burns valuable farm-yard manure, this statement will be found an eye opener. They cannot deny that burning of cow-dung will continue till a substitute fuel is discovered, and they have further to admit that the railways cannot bring the cheap forest fuel even within a distance of 50 miles. The same is their observation in the case of fodder. When an abundant supply of fodder is available in the forest, it cannot be brought by the railways to the cultivator's door even if the distance be very short. It is regrettable that on account of inefficiency of the railway system such enormous loss is accruing year after year to the poor agriculturist. One is simply unable to know as to why the railways have opened up the country-side and have not touched the forest which could be a source of revenue to the country. We have estimated that the revenue received from forests in the U. P. is less than 8 as. per acre and if the expenditure involved be deducted therefrom, the nett income will dwindle to a very small and insignificant figure. In spite of the vast fertile forest lands lying in different climates and conditions, India has to import wooden articles and wood for several industries from abroad. Upto very recent days, the railways themselves had to import sleepers for their own use. Pencils, and matches have to depend upon foreign suppliers for wood. The railways are thus not only unable to help the industries of the country but are on the other hand a great hindrance in the way of our industrial development. We shall content ourselves with giving here a few startling figures and leave the readers to judge for themselves as to how far our opinion is correct. A manufacturing firm of hurricane lanterns in Sitara State told us that they were purchasing their coal at the rate of Rs. 4 a ton at the colliery. By the time the coal reaches their works, the cost is raised to Rs. 26, i.e., more than six times the price at which the article was purchased and in this way freight charges alone cost Rs. 22 per ton. They further told us that freight charges of a case containing lanterns from Ogalvadi to Bombay, a distance of less than 200 miles are about 4 as. more per case than the freight charges from Germany to Bombay, a distance of thousands of miles. Under the circumstances it is impossible for an Indian manufacturer to compete with the foreign manufacturer. The Indian has to pay more both for his raw material and for his manufactured goods. In the same State there is another factory which manufactures agricultural implements. Its main handicap in popularising its goods is the railway freight. It represented its case several times to the Railway Board but justice has not so far been done to it. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee in its report was forced to admit that in the case of

manures preference is given in freight charges to imported artificial fertilisers in comparison to bone-meal and saltpetre, both very effective manures but unfortunately of Indian origin. Indian forests contain very large quantities of vegetable mould which can be used as manure but it cannot be made available to the Indian cultivator simply because of the railways, while artificial manure from thousands of miles away can be brought to the very door of the cultivator. The transport of milk and fruits on account of climatic conditions, is not possible and the railways have made no arrangement for cold storage. In every country railways have special arrangement for the export of these commodities and it is possible in New York, United States of America, to bring and sell milk from a distance of 150 miles while in India it cannot be brought from places at a distance of even 50 miles. Convenient trains for the easy distribution of agricultural commodities are not available. Recently export of mangoes to foreign countries had begun but it is yet to be seen whether this cold storage will benefit India ultimately or the amount of provisions and stores imported into the country will increase thereby.

Rolling stock takes a number of days to carry perishable articles. It is a well-known fact that no guarantee is ever given by the railways of the time within which a wagon is likely to reach its destination. A trader who is informed by a telegram that an agricultural commodity at a certain place is selling at a higher rate and he is likely to make money by exporting this article from his place to the market purchases the commodity, books it to its destination, but very often the prices go down by the time the commodity reaches its destination and instead of making money he loses it. Such a state of affairs naturally restricts the free flow of articles from one place to another. It is not the place to enter into the details of the grievances against the railway system but the fact remains that the railways do not help the cultivator to the extent they could. The report of the Agricultural Crises and its causes in 1921 in the United States of America points out the help that can be rendered by the railways to the agriculturists. It is stated in the summary of their report, "The Commission believes that immediate reduction of freight rates and farm products is *absolutely* necessary to renewal of normal agricultural operation and prosperity and recommends the prompt action by the Railway Board and constituted public authority to that end." Reduction of freight charges is an absolute necessity in the opinion of this commission, while, in the opinion of the Railway Board in India, depression of trade is just the time, when freight charges should be increased in order to balance the budget. The difference does not require any comment. It is the considered opinion of the "Business Men's Commission on Agriculture" that, "None the less, a relatively rising cost of distribution, by increasing demand, may result in raising them for a considerable period, or even permanently, if they had hitherto been abnormally low." But this reasoning does not appeal to the Railway Board whose policy appears to be to keep the working expenses at a high figure and then to say that the heavy freight charges cannot be reduced because it would not be possible for the railways to earn enough to defray the expenses. And so the vicious circle goes on

to the utter ruin of the country's trade. This important factor is recognised by the Agricultural Tribunal on Investigation and they have quoted specially the case of Belgium in which transport has been helped by a network of light road railways.

We must admit that very recently the railways have granted special rates for cane traffic and sugar export from different factories. Though the concessions are not yet quite enough they clearly prove the possibility of helping the industries by the railway system.

It is sometimes urged that the railways cannot be worked with profit if the freight charges are reduced and the Railway Board have never acceded to the demand of the commercial community to revise the freight rates of different commodities having due regard to the nature, the demand and supply of each commodity and to the requirements of trade with respect to it. Had they done so they would have been at once convinced that the rates required an immediate modification. Some of the cheap but bulky articles have got very high freight charges which cannot easily be borne by them. Similarly some of the high priced articles have got very cheap rates. Besides this, the manufacturing centres ought to have much cheaper rates for the supply of raw materials and also special rates for the distributing centres of manufactured goods. This principle was recognised as a sound one upto recently in the case of an English firm. That firm got special rates for its raw material and for the supply of manufactured goods. The concession remained in force for a number of years but it has now been withdrawn. Why the same concession cannot be allowed to other factories is not quite comprehensible.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT VERSUS WATER TRANSPORT

It is sometimes urged that the railways cannot compete with ships and boats, the working charges of railways being much higher than those of the former. If this is a correct view, why, we ask, was water-borne trade which was already sufficiently developed in this country before the coming of the railways, discouraged and finally forced to disappear? India abounds in rivers and canals and if boats provide cheap transport, nobody will be sorry if water transport is again developed with the help of recent inventions. What we want to impress on the authorities is that railways or no railways, boats or no boats, it is their bounden duty to make provision for cheap transport if they wish that trade and traders may thrive. The distributing cost of agricultural commodities must be brought down sufficiently if they really desire to help the cultivator out of the ditch.

As to the communication into the interior of the rural area the less said the better. There are no metalled roads in villages nor even *kachha* roads available and even the village tracks have been included in the cultivated fields.

POWER

India is a country which has very many falls both natural and artificial where energy in a large quantity and at a very cheap rate can be produced. The Government made a hydro-electric survey with a view to produce cheap power but very little has been done to make the scheme materialise. Cheap production is

impossible unless cheap energy is available. Coal is available only in one part of the country and the cost of its transport from that part to different places is prohibitive. Cheap steam power cannot therefore be easily produced by means of coal. Electric energy is the only power that can be had extremely cheap by harnessing the different falls. Though large forests are abundant, yet no attempt has been made to use this vast resource for the development of energy. There is no mineral oil available in British India barring Burma which is unfortunately situated to the extreme east of the country and there too the entire oil is the monopoly of a foreign company which sells it at a very high rate and tries to make the largest profit possible. The only occasion on which this company is forced to sell at a cheaper rate is when it has to compete with imported oil. It generally tries to make common cause with a competing firm and settles a rate at which both the firms can make a decent profit. The rate at which mineral oil at different firms can be sold in India, is therefore governed by the rates at which the foreign importing firm can sell it. It is a pity that the source of energy production is a monopoly of a foreign concern which cannot be expected to work in the national interest. Thus the question of producing energy from mineral oil is a difficult question. For the propagation of rural industries the cheapest power possible is required. As we have pointed out elsewhere the main limiting factor in agricultural production is water which can only be pumped from the sub-soil from a depth ranging from a few feet from the ground level to 100 feet. The energy required for pumping purposes, therefore, ought to be supplied at a sufficiently low rate. There are very big falls on the canals and also water from different lakes, mountains and rivers can be dammed in such a way that it can be made to create energy at a very small cost. No appreciable attempt in this line has so far been made. Only the Government of the United Provinces has tried to pool the energy created at different falls and to sell it for agricultural purposes. There also the rate of 1 anna is the lowest at which energy can be retailed to the farmer for agricultural purposes but for rural industries the charges are as high as 1 anna and 6 pies. The Royal Agricultural Commission found in their report that pumping from tube-wells does not pay except for the costly crops like sugar-cane. Unfortunately the Government, without any guarantee for propaganda or investment by the licensees, have sold away energy at 7 pies a unit to the licensee and it is being sold at not less than 1 anna per unit to the consumer. Thus out of 1 anna that the rural consumer has to pay for the energy utilised for agricultural operations, the Government gets only 7 pies and a net saving of 5 pies, *i.e.*, about 41 per cent. is made for nothing by the licensee. If the license had been given to a firm or people interested in agriculture, the thing would have been excusable. The tax-payers' money is thus utilised for the benefit of the licensee and the interest of the cultivator is altogether sacrificed. From our own experience we can say that the rate of 1 anna for pumping water from depths below 20 feet is prohibitive for ordinary crops. It is a very well-known fact that in most of the areas which have no irrigation facilities the

depth of water exceeds 20 feet. Thus a very large area remains unprovided for. It is difficult to understand why the Government has been niggardly in selling energy even at 1 anna per unit to the agriculturist for the use of small rural industries like ginning, rice hulling, flour, creameries, etc. We have already pointed out that the resources of the cultivator are slender and limited. Any small addition to his income by means of small agricultural industries, can help him a great deal. If the Government is afraid that the capitalists will make use of this cheap power, they can very well limit the concession to the *bona fide* agriculturists. There seems to be no logic in refusing the use of energy at this rate for rural industries.

Russia has shown that the first requisite for the development of a country is the production of energy at a cheap rate. She has proved that the secret of success in modern days, be it the development of agriculture or the development of industries, lies in making energy available at a cheap rate. Though we have no figures as to the cost of production of electric energy in Russia, yet the huge quantity of energy that she has produced is a clear indication that she could not have done so, had not the production of energy been very cheap. We know perfectly well that Russia possesses a very good area for tapping mineral oil but still she has produced electric energy for increasing the resources of their country. For the general development of a country cheap power is required but it is much more so in the case of agriculture which is the least paying industry in the world. The development of agriculture mainly depends upon irrigation and manure. Irrigation from wells, depends upon cheap power and the question of manure too cannot easily be solved except by the production of synthetic manures produced by artificially fixing nitrogen from the air. The Royal Agricultural Commission has rightly pointed out that a limiting factor in manure is the nitrogeneous manure. India has not taken to artificial manures so far nor is it likely that any demand for them will arise in the future as long as the prices of agricultural commodities remain what they are today. The only method that has been found successful in other foreign countries is the production of synthetic manure by passing a high power electric current into the atmosphere. As long as energy is not available at a very low rate per unit there is no likelihood of producing cheap manures.

It is noteworthy that in 1922 no less than 1,400 rural cooperative societies for the use of electric power were established in Germany alone. The most interesting case, however, is that of Denmark, because, unlike Germany on the one hand and Norway and Sweden on the other, that country has neither coal nor water available for the cheap manufacture of power. Yet despite these handicaps there have been established all over Denmark large societies for the manufacture and distribution of power, which is now widely used by the larger farmers and is gradually being extended to the small farms. It is not uncommon to find electric power on a farm of even less than fifty acres.

In Denmark, the telephone is almost universal. The Danish farmer is, to an increasing extent, supplied with power, light and telephone, all of them most valuable aids to the business of the farm, and it must

be known that the telephone service is not only cheap but exceedingly efficient. In India, a telephone connection is a very costly affair. It generally costs Rs. 200 a year in a big city while in a village even if one can afford the luxury, the cost would be much higher. No arrangement for 'phone connection is made for the use of the farmers who consume electricity at their farms so that when need may arise they may apprise the licensees of the defects of their system.

In the United States of America, the Federal Department has established wireless stations all over the country which are used for broadcasting weather reports, market news and other information which the up-to-date farmer requires. We cannot dream of wireless connection in the villages where even the post-offices do not exist and where the post is delivered not more than twice a week.

SUBSIDIARY RURAL INDUSTRIES

"Much greater attention has been given particularly in Germany, Australia and some of the small European states to subsidiary rural industry." The Royal Agricultural Commission has remarked in this connection, "If, therefore, a marked reduction of pressure on the land is required, it must be achieved by a definite diversion of the surplus labour of the country to industrial centres." A number of industries is mentioned in the report of this Commission and it will be a waste of time on our part to go into the details of those industries again. But we cannot abstain from drawing the attention of the people and the Government to the fact that industries connected with milk, grain and oil-seeds are the most important ones that should be introduced in every village. A superficial glance at the import figures of provisions and stores will clearly show that imports in this line are increasing every day. Is it not very disgraceful for a country like India, producing barley and oats in lacs of maunds every year, to stand in need of importing stuff like Quaker Oats, Pearl Barley and Oatmeal? It is sufficiently disquieting to an Indian whose country produces lacs of maunds of potatoes, rice, maize and other cereals annually to see that articles like starch, farina, etc., have to be imported from foreign lands. Fruits and vegetables have recently begun to be imported into this country from abroad. All this is due to the fact that no attention is paid towards the development of rural industries. It is necessary, not only from the point of view of the development of industries in this country, but also from the point of view that the cultivator cannot be made prosperous without adding to his existing income. The development of rural industries is a different problem from the development of industries in general. The one requires a very small amount of capital but a better organisation and protection than the other. By the introduction of industries, we not only add to the income of the cultivator, but at the same time we develop his mental outlook also.

AFFORESTATION

The importance of a forest planted in a place which yields nothing is very important from the point of view of agriculture. If in ravine lands, big tracts of barren and desert tracts, the right sort of trees are planted and looked after, cheap wood, fuel and fodder can easily be made available in abundance. Although nature has gifted us with vast resources in this respect, still no use is being made of them. Very little

attempt has so far been made to use ravine land for this purpose and the work done so far is insignificant. We need not repeat that to conserve farm-yard manure, it is necessary to have cheap fuel as a substitute for cow-dung. No amount of abuse heaped on the devoted head of the cultivator will change his methods unless and until a cheaper fuel is provided at his very door. The solution of this problem is afforestation. Looking from this point of view the importance of this branch becomes at once apparent.

CHAPTER VIII

The development of State or voluntary organisation, to provide the necessary central and local machinery for carrying out the various measures of agricultural policy.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

In these days of depression when both the public and the Government ought to have combined to overcome the present crisis, the Government looks with suspicion and wants to suppress every organized effort to enquire into the causes and to suggest remedies for improving the state of affairs. Several times we have drawn the attention of the Government in the press that the first duty of the Government in these critical days, is to collect facts and figures to know whether agriculture has remained a paying industry and whether it can defray the expenditure of rent and canal dues. But no such enquiry has ever been made and in most of the provinces, the canal dues are realised at the same rate at which they used to be realized before. As regards remission of rent the Government says that they are not concerned with it. There is no privity of contract between them and the tenant. Very small remissions of revenue and rent are therefore made. It is an open secret that the tenant cannot claim as of right, the remission even if the revenue is remitted. Thus the poor man has to struggle in a very vicious circle, he cannot organise himself nor is anybody allowed to do it for him to impress upon the Government the critical position under which he is passing his days nor his voice can be heard unless organised. Any organisation, it may be called by any name whatsoever, is bound to be considered as a part of the no-rent campaign.

It is a curse in this country that a public worker amongst cultivators is always considered to be of a dangerous type and as soon as any agricultural organisation deals with points connected with the Government the organisation and the public worker are dubbed as agitators. Their legitimate place is considered to be in jail. The result of all this is that voluntary organisation which plays a very great part in other countries either does not develop at all, or is not allowed to function as such. In order to achieve the improvement of this unprofitable industry, a central organisation with branches in each important village is needed for the entire country. Public workers who do not stand in need of official favours, or titles from the Government or who have no axes of their own to grind, do not take the trouble of forming really useful organisations. Thus the flow for public service dries on account of inanition. Unless and until a public worker decides to face the frowns of the local officials and is willing to undergo all the punishment that the Government can award he shrinks from taking up any public duty. This state of affairs is very deplorable and is the main cause that there exist no voluntary organisations worth the name in the whole country. One is simply surprised to find that in a

vast country like India where three-fourths of the population exists on farming, no chamber of agriculture exists, nor is there any all-India association to improve the lot of the farmer in all respects. Even amongst co-operators there are very few who can be called public workers in the real sense of the term. Those who have persisted in that branch of work their experience is not a happy one. Everyone of them narrates instances as to how many times he had to contend against the opinion of local officers and how many times he had to suffer on account of his opinions. Thus India lacks voluntary organisation to help the farmers in their struggle for existence. Notwithstanding these difficulties, one should not be discouraged if India wants really to go forward. A band of workers, who in spite of official frowns and afflictions that they will have to undergo, must come forward to work amongst peasants. Self-sacrifice is the key-note to success and if India wants to put its farmers on a higher plane, she will have to pay the price in the sacrifice of the best of her people. No country has ever gone forward without the help of the leaders of public opinion. Much less can it be expected of a country whose rulers are quite ignorant of the conditions prevalent in it and of the sentiments ruling the aspiration of the people. What is needed is a band of workers who will not shirk their duty in the public cause and will consider no sacrifice too great to offer at the altar of public good. They may be prosecuted and persecuted, but this is a necessary price that India must pay sooner or later. We lay special emphasis on voluntary organisation as spoon-feeding never raises the standard of any national character. It may not be out of place to mention that the entire educational and co-operative system in Denmark is the outcome of private efforts through the Government also help the institution but the initiative has always been taken by the people themselves. The co-operative system in Germany, similarly was started by a non-official and for a number of years developed by private enterprise.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

We lay more emphasis upon voluntary organisation in comparison to administrative organisation and it was for this reason that we discussed the question of voluntary organisation first. Coming to administrative organisation in other countries, there are county councils and agricultural committees to link farmers to the central organisation. Of course the organisations differ from one another according to the needs and requirements of every country. Unfortunately in this country there is no settled agricultural policy either of the Government of India or of provincial Governments upon which the departments have to work. Sometimes the whole work is centralised and at other times it is decentralised. There is no co-operation between the different departments nor the policy ever converges to one specified goal. As we have pointed out elsewhere expenditure on agriculture in India is very low but whatever it is, a lot of it is wasted on account of want of definite policy and co-operation between the different departments. One cannot understand the policy of transferring agriculture to an Indian Minister and to keep irrigation and forest as reserved subjects. In a tropical country irrigation is the key-note of any improvement in agriculture and

forests afford pasture grounds and fodder for cattle and when even these subjects are not allowed to be administered by an Indian Minister who is likely to be more familiar with the wants and difficulties of the agriculturist how can there be a hope of improvement in the hard lot of the cultivator? The latter are so closely connected with the former that it passes one's understanding how and why they are administered by a different agency.

We have already stated elsewhere that the cost of bringing canal water to the cultivator is very high and its burden on the tax-payer is crushing. He has to pay interest on the huge amount invested in the canal system. If a supplementary net-work of tube-wells were constructed much more area would have been irrigated and the facilities of irrigation would have been better accessible to the cultivator. Besides power farming would have been easily introduced in the interior of the country. We would not have grudged the huge cost invested in canals looking to the protection given by them to the cultivator had it not been for the fact that the department looks more to the revenue than to the help of the cultivator. Its main ideal has been to economise water at the cost of the crop, a cultivator grows. In the beginning when the canals were started the cultivators were given all the facilities for the use of water and persuaded to take to canal irrigation. But now when farmers have got accustomed to it Government tries to open more distributaries and minors and extend the area of command every year in order to get more and more money without taking into consideration the evil effects of this policy. The water in the rivers is limited and it is not in the hands of the department officials to increase it. If they increase the area under command, it means that they consider that there is water in the canals to irrigate it. But who can guarantee that the same quantity of water will be available for all time? So when there is not sufficient water in the rivers, the entire area served by the canals suffers. If the new commanded area had got surplus water alone, there might have been no objection to its extension. But when it becomes a permanent part of the system, one can very well visualise the injuries it is likely to inflict upon the cultivator in times of failure of supply of water. Under the law as it stands today, the Government considers the canals to be protective works and therefore their experts allege that their ideal is to distribute water on the largest amount of area possible. But they do not take any responsibility on themselves as to the water being sufficient to bring the crop to maturity. If this is the settled policy of the Government then the entire canal system is an insurance against famine and nothing more. That being so, the revenue on the canal irrigated land should be increased and no water-rates should be charged. But we know that the Government charges an occupier rate over and above the water-rates and after some years of this practice they increase a general revenue on the land irrigated by the canal. Thus a cultivator has to pay both increased revenue and the water-rates. There seems to be entirely no justification for this double charge. In case, a canal system is meant to give irrigation facilities to the cultivator an implied contract on behalf of the Government is created by which the Government makes itself responsible for the supply of water at the required time. That being so, the Government ought to be liable in all

equity and fairness for the damage done to the crop when the supply fails. To our bitter experience we have noted in number of times that even in cases when the entire crop was damaged the water-rates were not remitted and the cultivator had neither the courage nor the resources to move the officials and to claim remissions. Under the law the damage cannot be claimed. This anomalous position has done a great harm to the cultivator. Water is made available some times once in a month. A valuable crop like sugar-cane which demands a very large investment, sometimes withers away when water is not available even once a month. Sometimes only one watering is given to wheat and other crops and still the charges remain the same. There is no place in the country where the cultivator has not to suffer in one form or another on account of want of water at the required time. The Bombay officials have gone a step further. They seem to argue that the cultivator has no right to decide when the water is to be applied to his fields. They consider it to be part of their duty to decide which field is to get water and when. It is a clear encroachment on the legitimate rights of the cultivator and the idea is simply absurd and highly objectionable. Of course the Government could claim this right provided it held itself responsible that if the yield fell below a certain limit, it would pay compensation to the cultivator. But as long as the cultivator alone has to suffer the consequences of all the injuries done to him, the Government has no right to dictate its terms like this. Besides this, the canal officers are not agricultural experts and to acquire the necessary technical knowledge and experience is considered by them as something unnecessary. The condition of the cultivator in the canal area is simply that of helplessness in this respect. There are no rules upon which the water-rates are fixed nor has the cultivator any voice in the matter. One is really surprised at the miserliness of the department of irrigation that even when the total quantity of water available to the cultivator is reduced to 50 per cent. he is granted no relief. The question has several times been mooted in the Legislative councils but no regard has ever been paid to the clamour of the people. It being a reserved subject, nobody can force the hands of the Government in the matter.

DRAINAGE

Over and above all this, the drainage system of the country has suffered a great deal by the introduction of canals and railways. Water is locked up in a number of villages and it creates disease and lowers the vitality of the people. We were simply struck at the large amount of injury done in Meerut district by both these systems when we collected information about different places where the people were suffering on account of the catchment of water. The canal system is responsible for the drainage arrangement of the country but in spite of our persistent writing to the officials nobody cared to keep in order even the drains built by the canal department, what to say of the provision for improvement in this connection. In a number of villages, the water level is reduced very considerably and that has affected the health of the people very badly. In Bombay and in a number of parts of other provinces very large areas have gone out of cultivation, on account of the canals.

AGRICULTURAL POLICY

There should be a definite agricultural policy of the provincial Governments as well as of the Government of India. Of all Government measures that prosperity of the cultivator ought to be first concern. All Government actions will in future be judged by the criterion as to whether or not those measures have in any way helped the prosperity and the well-being of the agriculturists. The Government should be ready to hear the criticism of the public. The present officials attitude to persuade big people by giving them unnecessary grants or other helps so that they may, in season or out of season plead the cause of the Government officials, should be stopped for ever. Big men who have got enough, do not stand in need of grants or helps from the Government and the poor men seldom get it. The whole system has to be changed and the officials ought to know it that they are paid by the cultivator and they have to serve him to the best of their ability. Though they are Government officers yet they exist for the service of the public. They should understand that they are not beyond criticism and instead of trying to injure a public critic they ought to make friends with him and try to benefit by his advice.

PART IV
Remedies

CHAPTER I

INDIRECT REMEDIES

"Agriculture is not merely a way of making money by raising crops; it is not merely an industry or a business; it is essentially a public function or service performed by private individuals for the care and use of the land in national interest, and farmers in the course of their pursuit of a living and a private profit are the custodians of the basis of the national life. Agriculture is therefore affected with a clear and unquestionable public interest, and its status is a matter of national concern calling for deliberate and far-sighted national policies, not only to conserve the natural and human resources involved in it but to provide for the national security, promote a well-rounded prosperity, and secure social and political ability." (Business Men's Commission, page 20.)

FIVE YEARS PLAN OF WORK IN RUSSIA

The above are very weighty words of a well-known Commission appointed in the United States of America and they hold true for every country in the world that it is the primary duty of every people and every Government to take measures to preserve and protect the cultivator. Mere platitudes and bombastic words or persuasive language cannot fill the empty bellies of the masses of this country. A new sentiment or enthusiasm for a certain cause may easily be raised by a platform speech or by a propaganda but a real grievance of the masses which affects the daily life of a large population of this country, cannot easily be suppressed. As the above committee has very well pointed out that "Sugar-coated political pills will provide no lasting relief for an ailment which has in some phases become more or less chronic." A number of writers in India and out-side has described the miserable condition of the masses and it is absolutely necessary for us to chalk out a programme which may help in improving the condition of the cultivator. In this chapter and the following one we shall try to point out the major remedies by which the disaster is likely to be averted. Without in any way committing ourselves to the programme laid down by Soviet Russia for the welfare of her own people, one thing therein is very appealing to every body who has tried to study the condition of Russia during the recent years. The nation decided once for all to launch upon a certain programme known as the 'Five-year plan and every man and woman was ready to co-operate with the Government to work it out. The attention of the whole nation was rivetted to it and every body contributed his quota to make it a success. The result is simply surprising. All the statesmen of the world ridiculed and pool-pooled it and prophesied certain failure for it. But they had not to wait long to find out that they were false prophets. The ambitious programme set up by the Russians before themselves did not take even five years to accomplish it. Within a

period of four years only they were able to complete it. It was due to the fact that the whole nation had one single aim before it and it worked at it with all the devotion and earnestness that was necessary to make it a success. The first thing, therefore, which is essential to pull the people out of the depth of their present degradation, is the will and determination of the people themselves to work out their own destiny. We are perfectly sure that in spite of hindrances, draw-backs and short-comings, if the nation once embarks upon any fixed programme of development, an era of prosperity can be easily ushered in. It is true that the Government of Russia identified themselves with the people and did their utmost to carry out faithfully and loyally the ideal set before themselves. Unfortunately in this country the conditions are different and there is always a fear that the Government may not only not help us in carrying out any such programme, nay, it may even try to hinder progress, but in spite of this feeling we are confident that once the nation takes up the work in right earnest, the Government will have to co-operate with it. Even if it is not so inclined the determination of a nation of 350 millions will make it yield in the long run to the popular will. The rising tide of progress cannot be indefinitely stemmed by the hidebound conservatism of the Government. Determined and persistent efforts are, however, necessary on the part of the nation as a whole to right the economic wrong, under which the people have been labouring for a long time and it would require all the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of her youth to infuse sufficient zeal and energy into the masses to take up the prescribed programme.

FATALISM IS THE FIRST THING TO BE REMOVED

The 'Business Men's Commission' at one place has very rightly remarked, "The farmer is ordinarily a prudent and conservative man but as his prosperity depends more and more on forces outside his control, this prudence and conservatism are affected with a touch of fatalism and, in some cases, recklessness. Either feeling is deterrent to sound and progressive business." (Page 111.) This picture is all the more true of present day India. In order therefore to begin work amongst the cultivators it is the primary duty of every worker to shake off the lethargy and inactivity which fatalism creates in them. The feeling that their wretched condition is due to their own fate cannot be conducive to progress. If a nation or a section of people loses self-confidence, there cannot be any incentive to improvement. The prolonged miserable condition of the masses has forced them into a belief which makes them inactive even when they know how to improve it. An optimistic state of mind is therefore the first thing to be created. We must assure them that nature has endowed them with all the energy, intelligence and resources which are necessary for a man to become prosperous, and if they are further assured of help and co-operation by their educated brethren, there is no doubt that their outlook on life would become hopeful and bright, and half the battle would be won. We must convince them that it is they who can make or mar their own future, and that they are the makers of their destinies. If people born of poor parents and in miserable home conditions have prospered in other countries, there is no reason why it cannot be possible in the case

of Indian cultivators also. The field before us is so vast, the work so huge and the difficulties so great that they may appear appalling; but if we rightly handle them, success is bound to be ours. A propaganda of this nature amongst the people is the first thing required to begin with. Human beings are no doubt always prone to judge the future by the past but a determined effort can certainly stem the tide. Religious India has always believed in the marvellous effects of mental concentration and concerted action. "Heaven helps those who help themselves" is a well-tried maxim. Fear of failure and want of self-confidence are the sins of our people. Pessimism and fatalism have killed hope in their breasts and benumbed their spirits. Let us infuse hope, courage into them, let us teach them the lesson of self-confidence, awaken hope in their future, let us ask them in the words of the poet, "to be up and doing, with a heart for any fate" and let us make them "learn to labour and to wait." If we do this there is no reason why our farmers should remain for long the play things of fate, victims of the demon of despair, inert, inactive and without faith in their future.

In order to create this atmosphere of hope all round, a very determined and organised effort is needed. A strong organisation would be necessary for the success of such a country-wide propaganda, and the workers will have to contend against enormous odds and spirit killing disappointments.

REVERSION TO OLD DAYS IMPOSSIBLE

From the perusal of these pages the readers may be led to believe that we aim at the revival of the old conditions of society when every village was self-sufficient and did not depend upon the outside world for its needs. Without entering into a discussion of the merits and demerits of the old village civilisation and without comparing it with the modern civilisation of the West, we would like to say at once that whether the old system was better suited to Indian conditions or not, it is not a practical proposition in this year of grace 1933 to preach to the people to revert to the past. It is not practical politics now to ask the people to take to the old primitive methods of living. It is not easy to contend against the present temptations for a higher standard of living and nobody can be expected to successfully fight against the ideal set before itself by the present world. Old ways of living cannot appeal to the present and coming generations and whatever good points there may have been in them they cannot be brought back unless the India of today is strong enough to make its influence felt in the whole world to bring about a change in world opinions, which obviously she is not. It is therefore futile to think of bringing the old conditions back and our salvation lies only in following the modern methods of the so-called civilised world.

ORGANISATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The masses have to be taught the uses of organisation, which in modern civilisation is the first step to attain success in life. As the Hindu Shastras say, in Kaliyuga, the only power lies in organisation and this is the lesson which has to be taught to the Indian masses. In factories, in commerce, in politics and in every other activity of human society, the watchword of the present civilisation is organisation and organisation alone. However strong

you may be, you cannot stand against the organised world if you are unorganised or disorganised. Indians should therefore remember that for future guidance either in the field of politics or that of economics, their motto should only be "organise" and "organise". No doubt in the olden days there was a far better organisation amongst the village community as such but it was of a different sort, organisation on a wider scale in the district, province or the state was entirely absent. Whenever any foreign invader crossed the boundaries, we could not organise ourselves to stand against the common foe. Battles were fought not on behalf of the country or the state but on behalf of an individual prince or potentate and defeat or victory was his concern alone. The whole history of the political degradation of this country points to want of organisation as the sole fact which was responsible for it. The same has been the cause of the ruin of our industries. We have not learnt the lessons of experience. Our industrialists and manufacturers never organised themselves. Even today disorganisation of the worst type is found all round. Organisation does not necessarily require literacy or education but it does require a persistent training and perfect discipline. In order to be able to raise our head among the nationalities of the world we must undergo that training and discipline first. If we still believe in individualism as we have so far believed in it our future is doomed.

BUY INDIAN

We want to repeat once more that in face of the scientific improvements and discoveries made by other nations, India cannot support its present population on land alone. The pressure on land has become so great that it is impossible for the people any longer to maintain themselves. We do not mean that we cannot produce food sufficient for our population nor do we mean that so far as the simple requirements to keep the body and soul together are concerned, India cannot support its population on land. There is no doubt that even more than double of its present population can easily be supported by the produce of our land provided we are allowed to consume all the food we produce and export of foodstuffs is altogether stopped. But in these days of international communication it is impossible to close our doors against other countries. Even if we were able to follow this course, the present Government "in our own interest," would never allow this to be done. Just as natural agencies like wind and sunshine cannot be restricted to any particular area, similarly no country can refuse to send out its products to other countries and live in a state of complete isolation. It will be an indication of our weakness if we do so, but we have to guard ourselves against the in-roads of foreign countries. If under the present circumstances we produce more grain, we are bound to suffer more. This is a bold assertion and may even seem paradoxical. When a country is open to all the other countries of the world, its markets are always controlled by the world market. The idea whether a starving man can afford to purchase food at the rate at which it is sold, is never the concern of the seller. The dealer in grain always sells his commodity to the man who gives him the highest price. If his next door neighbour is starving, his pitiable condition will not induce him to reduce his rate. He may out of charity give him some-

thing as a dole but he can never sell his commodities at a cheaper price than his neighbour is ready to pay. Prices are never fixed only in accordance with the cost of a commodity or according to the purchasing power of the consumers of this country alone. If a firm in England can pay better, wheat is bound to be exported to England without any regard to the question as to whether or not necessary food is available for the inhabitants of the country. Nobody can doubt that the purchasing power of other countries is far greater than that of this country and this explains the secret as to how cereals and other articles necessary for food in this country are exported to other countries though a large number of people has to go without food in this country. If under the present conditions there is an unequal supply of food products, there is no likelihood that the surplus produce would be utilised for filling the empty stomachs in this country. As we have pointed out elsewhere even a cultivator who produces food, is forced to sell it without keeping sufficient for himself and the condition of others who do not directly produce, would be even worse. Those who think that the increase in production of food-grains is bound to better the condition of the cultivator are entirely mistaken. They forget the very important fact that the prices are bound to be depressed on account of larger production and consequently the purchasing power of the cultivator would be adversely affected and he would be worse off even than at present.

As long as India depends upon the supply of manufactured goods from foreign countries she is bound to export agricultural products in lieu of the imports that she is to receive. Exports of food-grains and other products are bound to continue so long as India imports finished products. This state of affairs cannot improve until industries are started in the country. The remedy therefore lies in the fact that a portion of the large population living on agriculture today must be diverted to other pursuits. The Business Men's Commission has rightly pointed out on page 121 of their report, "So far from receiving any benefit from widely adopted improvements in production, there is a chance not only that the whole benefit of the improvement will inure to the buyer of farm commodities, but that the farmer will even lose part of the returns which he obtained before the improvement was made. While, therefore, improvements in efficiency are incumbent upon the individual if he is to weather the storm, and while those who *initiate* improvements and keep ahead of the possession may enjoy a fair degree of prosperity, widely adopted improvements may mean for a considerable period less rather than greater prosperity. This is possibly one of the reasons why agriculture has been slow to introduce them in any large or organised way." The same Commission came to the conclusion that the only possible remedy to increase the income of the agriculturist was to lessen the number of people living on land. This is the opinion of an authoritative body in a country where only 25 per cent. of its population live on land. This principle will apply with greater force in this country where more than 70 per cent. of the people live on land. Therefore we have to divert a very large population of the people from agriculture to other pursuits. It will solve the problem of unemployment and at the same time bring about prosperity. As far back as 1880 the Famine Commission very forcibly pointed out this truth on page 103 para 34 of their

report. They say, "A main cause of the disastrous consequence of Indian famines, and one of the greatest difficulties in the way of providing relief in an effectual shape, is to be found in the fact that the great mass of population directly depends upon agriculture, and that there is no other industry from which any considerable part of the community derives its support. The failure of the usual rain thus deprives the labouring class, as a whole not only of the ordinary supplies of food obtainable at prices within their reach, but also of the sole employment by which they can earn means of procuring it. *The complete remedy for this condition of things will be found only in the development of industries other than agriculture and independent of the fluctuations of the season.* With a population so dense as that of India these considerations are of the greatest weight, and they are rendered still more serious by the fact that the members who have no other employment than agriculture are in large parts of the country greatly in excess of what is really required for the thorough cultivation of the land. So far as this is the case, the result must be that the part of the population which is in excess of the requirements of agriculture eats up the profits that it would otherwise spring from the industry of the community. It is not surprising that in a country thus situated material progress is slow." (*Italics are ours.*) It was said more than 50 years back and yet the population living on land has increased in the meantime from 58 per cent. to 73 per cent. The conditions which looked horrible to the members of the Famine Commission in 1880 should be much worse today after half a century and more. The first remedy therefore beyond the propaganda of hope and future prosperity is the diversion of population from agriculture to industry.

It is easy to suggest remedies but to give practical effect to them is much more difficult in a poor country which has no capital to invest, which has a huge population of illiterates, where lack of sufficient intelligence and skill is appalling, which is without experience of big organised industries and the last but not the least which has a foreign Government lacking in sympathy and caring very little for the interests of the industries of this country. It is therefore extremely difficult to start and organise new industries.

From the evidence that was placed before the Central Banking Enquiry Committee, we find that though the country is poor yet there is some amount of money available in the country for investment. There are enterprising people also who in spite of competition and unfair rate-cutting are prepared to start concerns like the Sindhia Steam Navigation Company but they all feel that the encouragement so necessary for the success of such ventures is not forthcoming from the Government and that their ventures cannot be successful without protection. It is true that for infant industries careful nursing is needed. We are also conscious that with the help and patronage of the Government in other countries, industries have flourished and succeeded within a very short space of time. Japan is an instance in point. With the help of Government she could achieve wonders within a very short period and could undersell every country in India. We have every hope that the Government would come to the help of

our national industries in the near future. But we should not remain idle in the meantime. We should try to stand on our own legs. It is possible for the people to start and organise some of the industries even without the help of the Government. If proper efforts are made sufficient sums can be collected in every district that can profitably be invested in industrial concerns. Over and above this, a very large amount of money is locked up in banks and Government paper and that can be utilised for industrial purposes. There are millionaires in this country who can be asked to invest a part of their hoarded wealth in them. But it is only possible if we can create an atmosphere of patronage for goods manufactured in our own country to the exclusion of goods imported from abroad. The capitalist simply wants an assurance from the general public that the articles manufactured by him will be patronised and as soon as this assurance is forthcoming he will be ready to invest his money in industrial undertakings and to run any risks. We may point out that the imports in India come to about 300 crores per year and if the articles imported from abroad are manufactured in India, it will give employment to a vast number of our population. Our internal trade is said to be 11 times that of the external trade and that gives the figure of about 6600 crores. Putting internal and external trade together we arrive at an approximate figure of about 7500 crores. A country which has such a huge market for sale and purchase does not stand in need of help either from the Government or from other foreign countries. The only thing required is that there should be perfect determination on behalf of every son of the soil that he will purchase only those things which are produced in his own country even at some sacrifice and even if the articles are a bit clumsy, dear and less durable. Finish and cheapness are always dependent upon experience and a nation which wants to protect itself, need not look to these defects in the beginning. 'Buy Indian Goods' should be our watch-word and every Indian should be fired with the zeal for using articles of Indian make. It seems that we are not so far alive to the potential strength hidden in this idea and have not realised the truth that a patronage from the public is more conducive to success than Government patronage. Slaves as we have been for centuries together, we have forgotten the strength bred of self-confidence and self-determination. There is no power in the world which can withstand national will much less the determined effort of a nation consisting of 350 million souls.

In the recent economic agitation that Mahatma Gandhi started for popularising Khadi we have found that lacs of people are provided for and thousands of mouths are daily fed on account of the new industry which was ridiculed and laughed at, not only by foreigners but also by some of the educated people of this country. In spite of the cheapness and fancy designs of foreign cloth, Indian mills have paid good dividends today simply on account of the fact that in most of the cities the idea of patronising Indian cloth has caught. If we can make our cotton factories successful simply by our patronage, the same thing can be done in connection with other industries. It is said that there was a certain tyre factory belonging to a foreigner working in Japan. When the Japanese started their own factory for tyre manufacture, this foreign concern started rate-cutting with the result that the Japanese company

suffered a heavy loss. The Japanese approached the managers of the concern and asked them to desist from rate-cutting. They did not agree to it and went on taking measures for ruining the infant industry of Japan. The Japanese decided not to purchase the tyres made outside their country and the result was that from the next day no tyre made in other countries could find a sale in Japan. The foreign concern came to a crash. After all, the market requires the good will of the purchasers and if the purchasers decide to purchase goods only of a certain make, there is no earthly power which can force them to desist from it. If we decide upon this policy, all our economic ills are bound to come to an end and a very large number of people will be diverted at once from agriculture to industries. There will be less competition for land, rents will go down, prices of agricultural produce will go up and the agriculturist will be happy and prosperous. It is in self-interest that the cultivator should take a vow to purchase only those articles that are manufactured in his own country.

It is sometimes suggested that if Indians decide to purchase only Indian made goods to the exclusion of the articles of foreign make the countries hit by this policy would retaliate and will not purchase goods produced by the Indian cultivator. It is said that India exports cotton to the extent of 69 crores, and if India does not purchase goods manufactured in other countries, that cotton will remain unsold and ultimately the cultivator will suffer. This is entirely a fallacious argument. In the first place the exports are not divided amongst different countries proportionately to our imports from them. The distribution is based on the requirements of the countries themselves. To give an instance, the share of cotton export to the United Kingdom in 1929-31 was 4,31,41,033 rupees while the import of cotton goods from the United Kingdom amounted to 37,79,94,661 rupees (1929-30). On the other hand cotton is exported to the extent of 27,29,64,000 rupees to Japan while imports of cotton cloth from Japan amount only to 15,74,17,323 rupees (1929-30). Thus the United Kingdom (Great Britain) took cotton from India to the extent of about one-ninth of its total exports of cotton goods while Japan purchased cotton from India to the extent of double the amount of its exports of cotton goods to India. Nobody can believe that in the near future Japan or England is likely to grow cotton, sufficient to meet its requirements, and it must consequently depend on other countries for supply of cotton. As long as India can afford to sell cotton at the cheapest rate, Indian cotton is bound to find a market in foreign countries. But suppose the worst comes to the worst and the entire export of cotton is stopped, the result would be that the entire quantity of cotton would be available for consumption in our own country and whatever we shall lose in cotton, we shall gain in cloth. The history of Denmark should be an eye-opener in this respect. "Upto 1870-80 cereals formed the bulk of agricultural export from Denmark. A culmination was reached in 1871-74 with a surplus export of cereal and cereal products averaging 41,000,000 crowns annually." (Agriculture in Denmark, page 12.) Since when she started rural industries it began to divert all her lands producing food-grains, etc., to the production of fodder for the milch cattle and today her exports are finished products and she is exporting those very articles which she used to import before. In the year 1921-23 her imports were unground cereals 210,000,000 crowns,

feeding stuffs 170,000,000 crowns and fertilizers 56,000,000 crowns and her exports consisted of cheese, butter and other milk products. It may be that for a year or two there will be slump in the market of certain commodities, but the ultimate result will be the prosperity of the cultivator. Those who are afraid of this slump, must realise that even today the condition of the cultivator is very pitiable in this respect. He is selling practically every commodity below the cost of production. In Madras at a number of places ground-nut crop was not taken out of the soil and was ploughed up instead because the prices offered for it did not even cover the cost of harvesting it. The same thing happened about jute in Bengal. In the United Provinces jaggery was unsaleable even at the rate of Rs. 1-12 a maund though the cost of making it excluding the price of sugarcane would be somewhere near one rupee a maund and a number of sugarcane fields was left unharvested. In the Punjab, the plight of the cultivator producing wheat and cotton was just the same. If these things can occur in normal times, worse cannot be said to be in store for him in abnormal times. All threats of exclusion from the foreign market are meaningless. The cultivator, in adopting the principle of buying Indian goods has necessarily to make greater sacrifices than his slender resources can allow. But he must be prepared to make them for in them alone is his salvation and if he will not become a whole-hoggar in Swadeshi he is bound to go to the wall.

If it were possible and practicable we would have advised him to adopt the old policy of a self-sufficing village and to refuse to be drawn out by the temptation which the market in urban areas offers him. The less he depends upon articles sold and manufactured by others, the less he will depend upon the prices. The beauty of the self-sufficing village consisted in the fact that a cultivator had not to follow agriculture on commercial lines and so his prosperity could not be affected by fluctuation in prices. The main defect in the present system of civilisation is that the cultivator is affected very greatly by the prices of his produce and he is forced to sell his goods in order to purchase articles which he can neither get by barter nor can he produce himself. For every thing that he has to purchase and every payment that he has to make, he requires hard cash. This system forces him to sell his products and naturally he has to suffer by fluctuation in prices. He should therefore understand this thing thoroughly that in case he purchases the fewest articles possible from the bazar, he will be affected the least by such fluctuations. In India there is no likelihood that in the near future Government will take any measure which may bring about the stabilisation of prices permanently. Consequently his salvation lies in curtailing the use of articles which are manufactured by others. If a cultivator cares to restrict his wants till the time he regains his prosperity, his bare necessities of life can very well be supplied by his very farm however small it may be. In case he cannot do so, he must take pretty good care that his purchases are restricted to manufacture of his own country so that he may be able to avoid the overcrowding of population on the land. Industrialisation in the country is his only solution and that cannot succeed unless he takes a vow to purchase goods manufactured in his own country.

EDUCATION.

In these days of international communication nobody can shut himself up from the outside world. Just as an on-slaught of an enemy does not spare the blind who cannot see him, in the same way, ignorance of the factors prevailing in the world cannot prevent them from affecting our general conditions. We may not have a knowledge of the different forces working in nature but it is certain that all these forces must affect us. The first and the foremost necessity of a national uplift including the agricultural population is the education of the three R's. Turkey, a very backward country, has recently been trying to place her house in order. The first thing that she did, was to see that every child of the soil, young or old, was made literate. She even went to the length of changing the character of the popular language so that literacy may increase in the least possible time. Her single aim in this respect was to see that not a single man in the country was left illiterate. Russia has done the same. These are the two most recent instances of the uplift of backward countries. If we look to the history of England herself we find that the revival of the letters was the beginning of her civilisation. Take any other country of Europe and you will find that compulsory primary education has added very materially to its well-being. Nature has endowed human mind with memory and intelligence. It must be considered to be a sin against humanity if any child of the soil is kept ignorant of the methods by which he can appropriate the experience and knowledge gained by his forefathers after prolonged labour and diligence. This is the first and the paramount duty of every state in the world but unfortunately we are denied this privilege. The Royal Agricultural Commission in their report on page 519 admitted the importance of literacy in the following words, "The figures of literacy and female education reveal in very striking fashion what are admittedly the weakest points in the educational position in India. To impart literacy is the essential object of education at the primary stage and *little progress in rural development can be hoped for without it.*" (Italics are ours.) The importance of primary education was fully realised by Indian statesmen like Mr. Gokhale and others who left no stone unturned to get free and compulsory education introduced in the land but all their efforts proved fruitless and even upto the present compulsory primary education is not more than a dream. The subject has been discussed times without number in the Legislature but matters remain as they were. To us, it seems that the inhabitants of this country have not realised so far that knowledge is more valuable to them even than food. If they once realised it, all money that they have so far contributed from public funds for the maintenance of colleges and high schools and other costly institutions must have been utilised for primary education alone. It is true that compulsory education cannot be brought about without the help of Legislature but as we have pointed out in several places public opinion has a force which is in no way inferior to the force of the Government. If the people of this country take it into their head to conserve this most valuable asset, we mean the human capital, they will at once concentrate all their energy on this important question. In spite of the apathy and indifference of the Government and its officials

a band of workers of young men from the colleges or schools who are out of employment and are wasting their time for nothing, can create a real thirst for knowledge amongst the masses. A burning thirst for literacy once created cannot be easily quenched. Even from the political point of view we consider it the first essential to spread literacy amongst the people so that whatever ideas the leaders want to disseminate, may be easily disseminated through writing. We appeal therefore to all our public men of a political bent of mind, to whatever school of thought they may belong that their first aim should be to spread literacy amongst the masses. From the Government point of view too, the officials must understand that a wrong idea amongst the people is likely to take a long time to be eradicated. Any sort of misunderstanding against the Government can be easily given currency in the rural area and there is no possible force which can easily remove it. If the people would have been literate, a communique on the point would have been quite enough to remove the misunderstanding. In the days of political agitation, misunderstandings and rumours are as dangerous as a real grievance. The speeches delivered at different places by the supporters of the Government cannot easily remove the impression created by one who wants to alienate the sympathies of the people from it. A new discovery cannot easily be brought to the notice of the villagers unless people be literate. The appalling illiteracy of the masses is a grave indictment against Government. We should at the same time ask the agriculturist to realise the importance of education. In a voluntary campaign of a national awakening, it is the masses themselves who must play a very important part. If they themselves decide to become literate there is no force in the world which can keep literacy back from them. Let every school in the village be flooded with scholars and let the adult males and females go to the nearest priest and ask him to educate them. If every temple, mosque, church, dharamshala and chaupal is converted for a short time into a school we can educate our people in no time. If the educated people who are out of employment, earnestly take to this task, they will earn the gratitude of the future generations and will get sufficient food and clothing. It requires an effort from all and sundry to make this effort a success. We are perfectly sure that all other improvements must be preceded by removing this blot of illiteracy from the face of the nation. It is sometimes argued that there are so many vernaculars in India, each with its own characters, that it is difficult for the Government to make provision for teaching them. Those who argue like this, could very well introduce some common characters and common language instead of making much of the complaint. But it seems the complaint itself is created as a veil for in-action. Secondly it must be remembered that India is a much bigger country than the whole of Europe excluding Russia. If in Europe consisting of a number of states having different languages, compulsory primary education has been possible why cannot the same thing be done in this country. It is all very well to put one excuse or another in order to avoid the responsibility of doing anything constructive, but if the Government or the people decide to achieve a certain object, all their difficulties will easily melt away like snow. Compulsory primary education is the crying need of the people and serious and earnest efforts should be made to satisfy it. It is the basis of every improvement,

CHAPTER II

Direct Remedies

MIXED AND COLLECTIVE FARMING

The problem of India's poverty, as we have shown already, is a problem of the stomach. The Indian poor do not get enough to eat. This is the reason why they cannot work with as much energy, strength and efficiency as their able bodied and better fed compeers of European countries. This problem must be tackled and tackled immediately. It brooks of no delay. The energies of the Government, the patriots and reformers, in fact of all who have brains to think with, hearts to feel with, and hands to work with, must be directed to the solution of this problem. If we are unable to preserve the human capital intact what shall we gain by our preaching and propaganda, by our theories and schemes, by our research work, etc.? Let us therefore be up and doing betimes.

Let us give more food and better food to those half fed men. But how can we do so is the problem of problems. We cannot call in charity to our aid. No charity, however great, can feed millions of people for an indefinite period of time. The only practicable way is to make the farmers produce a larger amount of the right sort of food and to see that a sufficient portion of it is made available to them for satisfying their hunger without depressing the market further.

The basic difficulty, as we have pointed out before, is that the cultivator who considered agriculture as a mode of living an independent life is now being forced by circumstances to follow it as a business. To make any profession a success from the business point of view requires a different mentality and a different intelligence. We should find out ways and means by which shrewd and calculating brains of men of business may be combined with the capacity to work hard and efficiently in the fields. We have seen that a farmer is a producer, a seller, a labourer and an investor all combined. To expect all these qualifications in an illiterate farmer with no knowledge of business principles is to expect the impossible. That being so, what is required is to make men having business instinct cooperate with the farmers. The two must be yoked together in willing comradeship so that one may complement the work of the other. When the farmer has to employ another person for selling his produce the result always is that the agent exploits the principal. In the same way if the farmer becomes merely a labourer he is exploited by the capitalist. Both these methods of exploitation should be stopped.

Russia is said to have solved this question by taking possession of the entire land and making everybody work and providing him with food and clothing. This idea appeals to most of the people in this country also but we feel this is no solution of the problem. In the first place, you snatch away the very same profession from the poor

man whose condition you want to improve and leave him at the mercy of the officers of the State. The basic principle of the Russian method seems to be that a few of the highly placed officials work and think for the whole nation and the independence of action of the individual finds no place in the scheme. It is something like making a man the tool of another. In a country like India nobody can agree to give this vast power in the hands of the officials and even supposing the masses agree to this what would happen if the treasury becomes depleted or the expected revenues are not realised? Disaster would clearly be the result in that case. The very idea of turning human beings into machines—working at the will of others, is repugnant to an Indian mind. According to Indian conception God made everybody to be independent in his actions. Such a scheme is, therefore, impracticable and it does not appeal to us. Besides this if we read the history of Russia we shall find that she herself has had to give up this idea and has been forced to leave the farmers alone to cultivate their own soil and sow their own seeds according to their own wishes, of course, subject to the general control of the State.

Thus we cannot agree that the farmer should leave the high position in society which he once occupied on account of his independent profession, but at the same time we do not want to see him starving.

Our aim should be to produce more food material than we are doing now. But this surplus production should be made available to the farmer for his consumption and should not be allowed to depress the market.

With this ideal in view we suggest that educated, intelligent and sincere people should organise and popularise collective and mixed farming among the cultivators.

By collective farming we mean that the whole village should be divided into groups of farmers performing all their operations together. Farmers who have their holdings adjoining should combine together for better farming and should pool all their resources together so that the unit of one farm may be sufficiently large and the present small holdings which for various reasons do not receive sufficient attention may be better cultivated. Each farmer should be paid in kind in accordance to his work and investment. By doing so the want of consolidation of holdings will altogether disappear. Facilities for farming such as better implements, seed, irrigation, etc., etc. will be easily provided. Money which is not easily available at present will be made cheap on account of better security and the intelligence and experience of the different persons will be pooled together. Not only the aforesaid economic advantages will be available but there will also be a number of indirect benefits derived from this method. People will learn the force of organisation, they will command a better market, will be able to undertake to supply better qualities of crops and will look after their children's education and training better. The curse of litigation will mostly disappear and the future of the people will become brighter and more hopeful. Most of the plots that are not giving any or are giving very poor yield on account of want of proper facilities are likely to produce much more under the above scheme. In the word

"cultivator" we include all the tenants and the zamindars who cultivate their land.

By "mixed farming", we mean the combination of dairying with farming. We recommend the method of mixed farming for the following reasons. It gives a chance of utilising dairy products as food. Even in cases where the cultivator may not be able to utilise milk or butter he will at least freely use separated and butter milk for his own food which will be more nourishing than the diet that he is using today. Best kind of manure and in abundance will be available. You cannot go on taking out more and more from the land for long unless you return sufficient food to the soil in the shape of manure. Besides this it will give sufficient occupation to the farmer and his family.

We need not go into the question as to how the labour rendered by the farmer is to be paid in this scheme or as to how the work of bullocks or land is to be compensated for. These are matters of detail and can be worked out in accordance with local conditions.

Two objections may be raised against this scheme. The first is as to how the different holdings or farmers are to be combined. It can be done in a number of ways. The best thing will be to form cooperative societies for this purpose provided they are left free from official control. The success of the whole scheme depends upon the free and willing co-operation of the people who are deemed to be the leaders of public opinion. This is the cheapest method of achieving the ideal. There are even now societies for better farming but so far they have not succeeded as they are mostly official ridden and there is neither enthusiasm nor initiative in the managers or members. The other method would be that the people may combine in joint stock companies. In this case the Government should fix a nominal fee for their registration and the registrar may simply see that things are kept in order. The second objection that may be raised is that by combining different holdings a large number of people will be thrown out of employment and the whole object will thus be frustrated. In the first place if the same amount is produced and distributed amongst the same number of people with less manual labour the system should be a blessing. But the objection has been anticipated and it is why we have suggested the method of mixed farming along with collective farming. We think both are inseparable and one cannot be a success without the other. The extra labour which is likely to be thrown out will be consumed by intensive farming which will be possible on account of new facilities. A great deal of labour will also be consumed in the dairy industry. Besides this the system of cropping will be changed and we shall include the production of more root crops in our rotation. The introduction of root crops is likely to give more and better food both to the cultivator and to his cattle. These are all matters of detail and their introduction will depend upon the local circumstances. Every cultivator who works with his hands or with his bullocks will be paid as far as possible in kind and not in cash for two reasons. Firstly it will be easier to pay and secondly in this method everybody will have more food to use and more articles to enjoy—an ideal with which the scheme is started.

We are perfectly sure that if the scheme is worked out in right earnest with honest and selfless workers it is bound to succeed and will remove most of the ills of the poor farmer.

SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

The first and foremost ingredient for any agricultural improvement is the system of land tenure. Feudalism or landlordism has disappeared practically in all the countries of the world but it is still flourishing in India. We have already pointed out that the land tenure system requires immediate reform. The greatest draw-back in the way of Indian prosperity is the fact that all money flows towards land and ultimately becomes frozen. It is thus neither available for trade nor for industry. A moneylender thinks it a much safer investment to lend his money to zemindars on the security of their property and by and by he becomes a landlord himself and in this way his capital becomes frozen in land and is lost to the country as a liquid capital. Most of the Indian banks which deal with taluquaders and big zemindars become proprietors of very big estates and thus their money is locked up in land. The old taluquadar or the big zemindar becomes a drone to the society; he hardly follows any profitable or beneficial pursuit and in no way enriches the country. Every human being who inherits a large estate and acquires a decent income without any exertion on his part becomes naturally prone to follow evil ways. If we trace the history of big zemindar families in the country, we shall find that most of their landed property has already passed into the hands of other people and they are so heavily in debt that their condition has become hopeless. A perusal of the reports of the Court of Wards in the different provinces clearly bears out this fact and most of them are unable to manage their own affairs with prudence. We must admit that some of these gentlemen are amiable and have regard for the prosperity of their ryots, but their number is extremely limited. Land is a gift of nature and no nation has a right to abuse it. If it does, nature's punishment is bound to come with a vengeance. That system of land tenure is therefore the best under which land is made to yield the highest amount of produce to the nation to which the land belongs. Many Economists have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this system but the consensus of opinion is that national interest demands that the cultivator be his own landlord. The basic principle upon which the prosperity of a nation ultimately depends is the method by which peasant proprietors are created. Every country in the West has adopted the system of peasant proprietorship and the number of peasant proprietors is daily increasing.

NO BOLSHEVISM

We are not an advocate of expropriating the landlords from their vested interests which they have acquired in the land by inheritance or by purchase; nor is it a practical proposition. We respect the principle of individual ownership but at the same time we believe in the sacrifice of individual interests for the benefit of the country or the nation. We are of opinion that a persistent and a continuous effort should be made both by the Government and the people to confer proprietary rights

on the cultivator. With Government help the problem can be easily solved. If a certain amount of money be available on low rates of interest to the cultivator to be paid back in long terms of say 50 or 60 years and the cultivator be allowed to purchase land he cultivates through courts on payment of a reasonable price a large number of peasant proprietors can at once be created. The Court of Wards can also be helpful if before selling any landed property by auction or otherwise, they decide to sell proprietary interests to the cultivators by making small lots of the land proposed to be sold. The Government can provide money at a cheap rate of interest at least in the case of solvent cultivators. The same object can be achieved by another method also. The price of land be distributed over a number of years and the tenant be allowed to pay this amount by instalments along with his rent so that at the end of the fixed period he becomes the proprietor of the land he cultivates. A number of other ways can be devised to confer proprietary rights on the cultivator without in any way expropriating the rights of the zemindars. After setting apart a decent area for zemindar's own cultivation the remaining area can be settled upon peasant cultivators by a right of compulsory purchase acquired by means of legislature. If the principle of peasant proprietorship is decided to be given effect to and a campaign is started in right earnest for the growth of this system with the help of necessary legislation it will not be necessary to bring forward any reforms with a view to afford security of tenure to the agriculturists as is being done at present.

From the political point of view the division of landlord and tenant can be much more dangerous to the internal peace of the country than communal questions. If politically-minded people decide to join hands with tenants, the complicated tenancy laws can be easily done away with putting an end to the complicated machinery of recognising sub-tenancy rights or those of other interested holders of land which now exist only in the interest of landholders alone. Litigation about tenant land also will decrease for in the case of peasant proprietors there will be no suits for arrears of rent, ejectment cases, suits for enhancements, etc. The Government will not have to employ such a big cadre of Revenue officers and their subordinates. We are sure that the Government which is trying to secure occupancy or other hereditary rights to the cultivator in one form or another would also welcome the agitation on this score. It would really be a happy day for India when the distinction between a tenant and a zemindar disappears altogether from the land.

If the present depression continues for another few years and the cultivator is once convinced that the present fall in prices is to continue for sometime to come, you will find that within less than two years a dangerous agitation would probably be afoot both against the landlord and the Government which patronises them. We have pointed out elsewhere that in these days the cost of cultivation is far higher than the price of the produce and it is practically impossible for the cultivator to pay a very high rate of rent. In a number of villages conflicts between zemindars and tenants have already occurred with fatal results. As long as rents are not brought on an economical basis, such conflicts are bound to multiply and in spite of the military and the police at the command of the Government, it would

not be possible to force peace down the throats of the starving millions. The condition of the zemindars too is becoming very pitiable everywhere. Their margin of profit has considerably gone down and they are unable to meet their liabilities. They are running into debt and their estates are being sold every day either for Government revenue or in lieu of debts they have incurred for payment of Government dues. The Land Alienation Act or laws of a like nature may serve as a stimulus to a dying patient for sometime but they are bound to prove ineffective in the long run to save him. If the Government wants to protect the zamindars from their creditors by declaring estates as inalienable with what logic can Government desist from giving the right of purchase to the cultivator? It may be that on account of the general depression there may not be a general demand to purchase land by the cultivator still the very idea that the right of proprietorship is available to them will be a stimulus to the cultivators to some extent.

IMPROVEMENTS OF WATER FACILITIES

Coming to the case of improvements in agriculture, the idea of introducing labour-saving implements cannot be much extended. The introduction of such machines will throw a large number of people out of employment. In countries where labour is costly and scarce, labour-saving implements may be useful but in a country where the agriculturists remain unemployed for more than six months in a year or stating the same thing in another form where unemployment has reached the high figure of 50 per cent. it is useless and sheer waste of time, money and energy to try to introduce labour-saving machines.

Improvement in agriculture can be brought about with the help of irrigation facilities and manure. Irrigation facilities either by canal or by any other means are the first requisite of every improvement. Government officials should understand once for all that the canal exist for the cultivator. All attempts to increase revenue at the expense of the cultivator should be stopped and stopped once for all. Canal rates should be fixed in accordance with the price of the crop and the cost of cultivation. Canals have come to stay and the major portion of them are productive. A cultivator who raises his crop with their help considers it as his legitimate though it may not be his legal right, that water will be available to him at the time when his crops need it most. The cultivator has not only to pay the canal dues but also has to pay a higher rate of rent thereby increasing the amount of revenue on canal irrigated land, yet he is never sure of getting water at the proper-time. If his crop fails he gets no remission and even if he gets it, it is no consolation to him to get a few rupees when his entire crop is ruined. There are many wells in the country but there being no cheap motive power to lift water from them, most of them are not used at all. The first and the foremost programme for the people and the Government therefore is to provide a net work of wells with cheap pumping arrangement and to remove the existing defects in the canal system so that water may be available to the cultivator in proper quantity and at proper times at a cost commensurate with the income that he gets from his fields. All improvements in village implements and in finding out better seeds or making researches under highly paid experts

seems to be sheer waste of public money at the present juncture. The first essential for improvement and better cultivation is water and facilities for water therefore should occupy the first place in any programme for the uplift of the cultivator. We have pointed out before that the canals have cost forty-six rupees an acre per cultivated area and we are pretty sure that with this huge investment in any locality where sub-soil water is easily available for irrigation, a much smaller amount will be found sufficient to instal a surer and much better method both for protection and production.

MANURES

To think that artificial manures will find a sale in India is a dream which will never be realised. In spite of all the patronage that the railways and the Government officials can give to these manures the cultivator is not likely to purchase them. It is a pity that in a country which is endowed with optimum conditions for fixing nitrogen from the air, no investigation has so far been made to find out the ways and means to provide the plants with this essential material. There are very large quantities of potassium nitrate or nitre earth in the country and everywhere nature produces this commodity in abundance but thanks to the excise and railway policy these commodities which would have solved the nitrogen problem of this country are not made available. One labours in vain to find out the effect of these manures on different crops in the published reports and bulletins of the department of agriculture. Although these are of Indian origin no attempt is made to bring them to the door of the poor cultivator at the rate within his means. Bones which are abundant in this country are exported in lacs of maunds annually and though the All-India Board of Agriculture asked for the prohibition of its export nothing has been done so far to give effect to that recommendation. We are told by the Government experts that the cultivator has a religious sentiment against their use. It may be partly true but has the Government ever made any attempt to introduce this kind of manure to the agriculturist and to convince him of its utility? All the efforts of the agricultural experts are concentrated on the artificial manures and indigenous manures are neglected. It will not be out of place to mention here that the freight charges on bone meal and potassium nitrate or nitre earth on different railways are higher than the rates charged on artificial manures. The farm yard manure is however the best from the practical point of view to the Indian agriculturist. It is quite a simple manure and is complete in itself. The Government experts also believe in it but no pains have so far been taken to make further researches in order to find out better and more speedy methods for its decomposition, etc. The only discovery that has been made is that it is foolish for the cultivator to use it as fuel, but the poor cultivator can only be blamed for this misuse if he is provided with substituted fuel at a cheaper rate. India is mostly a vegetarian country and consequently its salvation lies only in mixed farming. All our energies should have been directed to the making of a mixed farm a paying proposition. It would have automatically solved our manure problem. Keeping milch cattle and producing milk products for dom-

estic use and export purposes depends mostly upon the successful elimination of adulteration from the country. We have already said much against this abuse but so long as this abuse is not eradicated with a strong hand any money spent on improvement in dairy cattle and dairy products would be a waste of public money. The question of further researches comes only after due provision of manure and irrigation facilities to the cultivator. It is not the proper place to enter into any detailed discussion in this respect but we cannot help observing that even the research programme has to be taken up from a different angle of vision altogether. High range researches may be very useful for a country which can afford them but a country like India more practical researches are needed for the present if the agriculturist is to benefit by them.

RURAL INDUSTRIES

Last but not the least is the provision of introducing rural industries in villages. Next to spinning and weaving which can give occupation to the largest number of people in this country comes the dairy industry. In case the mixed farming scheme does not succeed dairy industry should find the first place in the economic uplift of the country. There is a very great future for it in this country but there can be no hope for its success until steps are taken against adulteration, etc. to allow honest people to enter the field and start such useful industries. If municipal boards make it penal to sell adulterated milk and milk products and dishonest dealing is stopped with a strong hand there is ample chance for success for the dairy industry which will also relieve unemployment to a very large extent. A demand for better cattle will be created and people will realise the value of proper nourishment for cattle. Automatically inferior cattle will disappear and breeds will improve and work on the right lines will begin. Unfortunately Government experts begin at the wrong end and meet with failure. The Government should first tackle the problem of adulteration and then take steps to improve breeds, etc. Facilities for transport and for cold storage should be provided on the railways and then the question of breed can be taken up. We attach the highest importance to this industry in the economic uplift of the cultivator.

Canning and preserving of fruits and vegetables is the next important industry. It can be easily started but no effort has so far been made to introduce it here, although India imports canned and preserved food to the extent of Rs. 66 lacs a year. Mango is the most important fruit produced in abundance in this country. Any Government with the interest of the nation at heart would have paid heed towards the development of this commodity and arranged for its export to other parts of the world gaining crores of rupees for the cultivator. The belated efforts of the Marketing Board are welcome but they are nothing more than a drop in the ocean. There are many small industries like soaps, gluc, starch, pearl, barley, etc., and others which can be profitably introduced. Agriculture, sericulture and horticulture are other important and very valuable occupations which can be taken up by the cultivator and can add sufficiently to his slender resources. All these industries require a persistent effort on behalf of the leaders of public opinion and of the Government.

Big agricultural industries like sugar making, manufacturing starch, paper boards, etc., can be started amongst the villagers themselves with the financial help from the Government and with the expert knowledge of Government officials at their back. But unfortunately even in the case of the sugar industry where the consumer is taxed to the extent of 200 per cent. by levying the exorbitant duty on the import of sugar, the interests of the poor cultivator are being entirely sacrificed. Sugar factories are started by the capitalist in order to exploit the cultivator. The farmer is left at the mercy of the capitalist although the idea of protection is alleged to have been started by the Government in the interest of the cultivator alone.